

SCIENCE OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

The design on the flap represents the manifold manifestations of the psychic phenomena. The rolling ocean below and the cluster of clouds in the sky overhead reveal the Nature's dance of dynamic forces. The God Natarâja is the embodiment of the psychic phenomena. The very expression of this picture brings to our mind the fine couplet by the Poet Rabindranâth as given below:

*"Chetanâ-sindhur kshubdha taranger mridanga-
garjane,*

Natarâja nritya kare unmukhar ashânta puvane."

(On the ocean of unending consciousness and in the midst of sonorous melody of the restless and roaring waves there dances the God Natarâja with the noisy storm-wind blowing around Him.)

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SCIENCE OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

by

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mind. But these powers are the scattered gems and pearls in the courtyard of the Divine Lord and so they never help us to enter into the inner sanctuary of Chintamani, the Lord of the universe. "It is for this reason", the Swâmi says, "that Jesus the Christ, Buddha, Râmakrishna and other spiritual leaders of mankind forbade their disciples to make any demonstration of psychic power or psychic phenomena, but taught them to obey the true spiritual laws by rising above psychic nature" (p. 17):

The Swâmi warns us always not to give any response to the alluring call of our selfish motives and desires—not to run after the will-o'-the-wisp of the psychic phenomena, but he instructs us to overcome and transcend them with our triumphant march towards the realization of the absolute consciousness. He says that it is our goal of life to immortalize ourselves with the "radiance of Eternity" and not to make ourselves the "men of the cave" of Plato. It is the Blessedness alone that can remove the tears of the world—that can console us with the solace of tranquil peace and everlasting bliss.

It is wise to bear in mind the words of the Swâmi: "The secret chamber of the soul of an ordinary man and woman is packed up from the ceiling to the floor with thoughts and ideas that are worldly, with desires and happiness of the flesh; and still we wonder why God does not come to us, why we have not attained Godconsciousness" (*Path of Realization*, p. 139). So, "there must be", as the great mystic Eckhart says, "perfect stillness in the soul before God can whisper His word into it, * *. When all passions are stilled and all worldly desires silenced, then the word of God can be heard in the soul."

The spiritual perfection is the Be-all and End-all of human life. The charms of psychic phenomena are frail and fleeting to those who really aspire to drink deep the nectar of Heaven and Immortality. So, we should not be mad

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to run after them but we should raise ourselves to the Olympic height of perfect wisdom and eternal freedom.

The present volume is an offer of ours as the third contribution of the *Abhedânanda Memorial Series* to the reading public. It contains five illuminating lectures on the *Science of Psychic Phenomena*, delivered in America and they march with array of historical and experimented facts,* skilfully dealt with philosophical and scientific reasonings. The Swâmi thus deals with his subject in the Chapter I that the psychic forces are submerged under the threshold of the subconscious mind-ocean. They are like the waves of different sizes that rise from the bottom to the conscious plane and play the miracles of wonderful powers. These powers exist originally in the universe and pervade the whole field of it. They are not at all extraordinary, as supposed erroneously by a majority of people; they appear such because we do not know their real nature and ~~the~~ source from which they come; they remain to us as obscure and unknown and so we take them as wonders. The Swâmi has wisely tried to find out all the phases of these powers with a spirit of a true scientist, such as, hypnotism, telepathy or thought-transference, mind-reading, clairvoyance, clair-audience and other marvellous psychic phenomena. He says that these powers can be achieved and mastered by systematic Yogic practices. The *Pâtanjala* and other systems of Yoga of India deal with them and say that they are the inherent powers of the mind. They bring only material prosperity and success, and ~~fail~~ to bring unto us deliverance and heavenly peace.

In the Chapter II the Swâmi deals skilfully with the *Prâna and the Healing Power*. He says that human mind is nothing but "a continued adaptation to environments. * * The more perfect the adaptations, the more perfect is the manifestation of life" (p. 17). The law of adaptation.

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is not mechanical or chemical, but it is what we call the manifestation of the life-force or vital energy. Everything in this universe is governed by this great law and the violation of this law brings disorder in the physique (body) and the psyche (mind), brings ill-health, diseases and the similar disturbances. Life-force or the *Prāna* is the prime mover of the mind and the sustainer and preserver of the organism in the universe. So, if any one can control this life-force he becomes the master of the body and the mind, nay, he becomes the master of the universe.

The Chapter III deals with the *Magnetic Healing*. This magnetic healing is also the power of the *Prāna* or the mind. In this lecture the Swāmi narrates two of the striking incidents of the magnetic healing power of his great Master Śrī Rāmakrishna: one is that of the curing the headache of Swāmi Vivekānanda and the other is that of removing the appetite of some of the Master's disciples.

The Chapter IV deals with three lectures (1) *Science of Mental Healing*, (2) *Spiritual Healing*, and (3) *Healing by Discarnate Spirit*. In the first lecture the Swāmi shows well the intimate relation between body and mind. In it he refutes all the prevailing materialistic theories which view that life and mind "are the results of material forces and chemical actions of matter. * * Consciousness is the result of the activity of the brain cells." The Swāmi shows that "every mental function produces corresponding physical changes in the system". Mental suggestion produces wonderful effect upon physical body. He gives two illustⁿations about it: one is of a girl who was cured by mere suggestion in her hypnotic sleep, and the other of a man who fell victim to death by suggestion. The close study of the latent powers of the mind and its exercise cure all the diseases and ailments. The Swāmi gives here a statement as a personal experience about his curing of mountain-sickness by the power of the mind. He shows

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that every organ of our organism has been created as the outcome of our desires. The mental healing is a natural power and not an extraordinary one.

In the second lecture the Swâmi says that "all spiritual healing is produced by the individual self" when he reaches to the highest stage of spiritual progress. This science of spiritual healing embraces various methods of healing, such as, regulating the body and mind, physical movements and correct breathing. It contains the *negative* as well as the *affirmative* methods. There is another kind of healing which is called the *metaphysical* method. He states here how he cured the fractured *fibula* of his right leg by mental suggestion when he was in Vedânta Ashrama at West Cornwall, Connecticut. He says also that before healing others we should acquire the self-healing first.

The third lecture of the Swâmi shows how the discarnate spirits possess the healing power. He says that "prayer is another method by which healing can be done". He lays ~~stress~~ upon right faith and not upon the blind one. So, he concludes by saying: "The science of spiritual healing thus explains the power of the Spirit over mind and matter, and that each living soul, being the image or reflection of the Divine Spirit, is the true healer within us."

The Chapter V gives a masterly interpretation of the *Science of Perfect Health*. In it the Swâmi shows that "perfect health is the firm and sure root of success, prosperity, the fulfilment of desires and the freedom of the soul." He says that the body is the temple of God, the body is the instrument by which men can reach the spiritual achievement. He refutes here again all the materialistic arguments regarding the soul and consciousness. He also condemns the unjust and queer criticisms of the Christian missionaries and the so-called apostles of Western civilization who ridicule the customs and sanitary laws of the Hindus of India and says: "They condemned this custom and called

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the Hindus heathen idolators and worshippers of cows. With a loud noise they tried to civilize them by converting them into their own faith. But now those heathen customs are adopted in civilized America."

"In India, religion was brought into every phase of life" says the Swâmi. The Hindus and peoples of India really eat religion, drink religion, sleep religion, talk religion and dream religion. Religion is their "laws of life", and so they apply and use religion in all the spheres of their life. "Constant thought of material objects drags the soul down on the plane of gross matter" and the Swâmi calls this "thought" or 'attachment' *delusion* that compels us "to mistake the body for the soul and matter for Spirit." So he instructs us to strike off the fetters of earthly attachments and to seek God, the unchangeable Reality amidst the continual changes of the world. He says that it is only the body that suffers from the cold or diseases, and not the soul. The soul is diseaseless and deathless. But the body should not be overlooked and ignored as ~~it is the~~ means for achieving the highest goal of human life. The robust body or sound health is necessary in order to enjoy the blessings of life, and this "is to be found when one does not think of the body, when one does not feel its existence in particular."

The treatment of such abstruse a subject by Swâmi Abhedânanda has been made with a critical observation and keen sense of judgment with a clear and lucid style. Readers familiar with the works of the Swâmi will see in these pages, the firm imprints of scholarship, intellectuality and spiritual excellence along with a comprehensive view of a master mind. His wonderful argumentativeness and clear insight bear testimony to the fact that he himself knows fully well how to unveil the mystery of the world and psychic phenomena, and so he has got every right to deal with this difficult subject and to show the path of

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emancipation to them who are carried away by the flood-waves of charms of psychic phenomena.

Our all labours for bringing out this volume will really be rewarded if it can delight the thinking minds who are sincerely eager for knowing the nature of psychic phenomena, its amazing power and the mystery of it.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA MATH, }
CALCUTTA, } THE PUBLISHER.
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CHAPTER I

THE PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

Jesus the Christ manifested a great many wonderful powers, like walking on the sea, opening the eyes of the blind, curing diseases, and so on. All these powers have also been manifested by other great Saviours of the world. These powers are universal; one may claim that they belong to one particular manifestation alone and not to others; but in fact, in our present day, we find that many enlightened minds possess similar powers.

Whatever power exists in the macrocosm exists also in the microcosm. The same forces which operate in the physical nature also manifest themselves through the body of a human being. The forces of the nature that move the world, such as the power of attraction, gravitation, heat, light, motion, electricity etc., are also operating through the microcosmic body of a human being; the difference between them lies only in degree, as on the physical plane, so on the psychical plane. The mental powers, which have been from time immemorial exhibited on the human plane of existence, demonstrate the fact that these powers also exist in the Cosmic or Universal Mind, only in an infinitely larger proportion. All mental powers.

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which human mind manifests, proceed from the Cosmic Mind, which is the storehouse of infinite powers and infinite phenomena, and which forms the background of individual minds. Individual minds may be called eddies in that eternal current of the Cosmic Mind or the Universal Mind. The current of the Universal Mind has been constantly flowing from eternity to eternity, producing an infinite number of eddies or individual minds, generating waves of different size and dimension which are known as mental functions or psychic phenomena. These waves rising from the subconscious plane, reach the plane of consciousness, then go down again below the threshold and remain merged in that realm of subconscious mind. The subliminal or subconscious mind is much larger than the portions of which we are conscious.—The life of an ordinary man or woman represents only the commonest powers of the mind substance such as thinking, willing, reasoning, discriminating, feeling and so on, but these powers we do not consider as wonderful although they are equally marvellous, because we find them almost everywhere.

If we trace the origin and process of reasoning or thinking, we shall find that it is the most wonderful power that exists in the universe—still we do not pay any attention to it; we do not call it marvellous or super-normal because we consider it as a natural property of human mortals. But whenever we find any extraordinary manifestation of any of these

powers we look at it with great admiration, awe and reverence. Those who manifest such extraordinary powers are known as geniuses and prodigies. We recognize them and adore them on account of their powers, because they are uncommon, and we do not find them in our ordinary daily lives. The tendency of the human mind is to recognize and value that which is rare and uncommon, and for this reason we admire geniuses and prodigies. They possess a certain power, something which makes them shine over the heads of the multitude, and therefore we look at them with admiration and wonder. They are like gems in the midst of ordinary stones. But these great geniuses display their powers in different planes, in art, in science, in morality, in spirituality and in other field of human genius. What a musical prodigy or genius can do may be impossible for a prodigy in Mathematical calculation; what Mozârt did could not have been done by Pascal, and what Pascal did could not have been possible for Mangiamelo, the son of the Sicilian peasant, who was never taught any Mathematics, but who was just like a Mathematical machine. There are many other instances of such prodigies and geniuses, and prodigies display unusual powers of the subconscious mind on intellectual and artistic planes, so there are many wonderful prodigies in various departments of the psychic field. There are hypnotists who possess wonderful powers, and they may be considered as geniuses, but we do not

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recognize them as such. We limit the terms "genius" and "prodigy" to a certain class of individuals.

Like hypnotism, telepathy, or thought-transference, mind-reading, clairvoyance, clairsaudience are marvellous psychic phenomena. Telepathy we can now understand better by studying the process of wireless telegraphy. If you have a transmitter and a receiver, then the message can be sent, but they must be on the same plane of vibration. I have already described that human minds are like eddies in that one eternal current of Cosmic Mind; therefore, they are connected, and that connection is made apparent when telepathy or thought-transference is practised. You can see it in one room and a friend in another; then if you have a certain thought and your friend be *en rapport* with yourself or your mind, you will receive the message. We must not forget that there are three spaces. Physical space is not the only space. There are also a mental space and a spiritual space. Spiritual space is still higher than the mental space and mental space is behind the physical space. So, message can be sent on the mental space and can be received.

Telepathy is possible at a great distance. Your friend may be in Europe, in India or on the other side of the earth, and yet you can send a message and receive one. Thought-vibrations run more quickly than any other known power or known vibration. They are quicker than electricity;

therefore, it is said that mind can go anywhere, to the sun or to the moon and all through infinite space in no time. And these powers show that mind can see and hear and smell at a great distance. Ordinarily, our minds are engaged within the limits of the sense organs and sense powers. We depend for our perceptions upon these organs or senses, but with the psychic it is different. A psychic does not depend on sense powers and sense organs. His mind is free, emancipated and liberated from this slavery to the senses; his mind is released from the organs. But those who are living on the sense plane, depending upon the sense powers, do not realize that mind is the seer, mind is the hearer. They think that the body is absolutely necessary for the perception of objects, just as an ordinary person, who does not know anything about wireless telegraphy will consider that a dynamo, electric wires and other apparatus are absolutely necessary for sending a message; but those who understand atmospheric electricity will not be limited by those conditions. Similarly, those who possess psychic powers, like clairvoyance and clairsaudience, will understand how the mind can see, hear, and smell from a distance.¹

The power of clairsaudience is also wonderful. We all know the remarkable psychic power of Joan of Arc. She heard a voice saying that there was a sword behind the altar; it was true and she got that

1. Vide Swami Abhedānanda: *Our Relation to the Absolute*, pp. 58-59.

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sword. Socrates used to hear the psychic voices; and there are many living instances where these powers of clairaudience has been manifested.

Psychometry is another psychic power. By psychometry a person can read a sealed letter and describe the physical condition and the character of the writer. I know of an instance in New York of a psychometrist on whose forehead I held a sealed letter, and that person described exactly the physical body, the dress and everything concerning the writer. These things come in the form of visions. When a seer holds a letter on the forehead, he first sees the writer and afterwards the writing. A psychometrist at one time held a piece of stone in her hand, and in a vision she saw the villa of Cicero, the nature of which was entirely unknown to her. She did not even know that piece of stone was brought from the villa of Cicero, and she described exactly from what spot or corner it was taken, and so on.

There are other powers which are manifested by person of abnormal disposition. Sometimes amongst insane persons you will find the development of some psychic power. One of the most remarkable psychic phenomena is the disintegration of personality as found in a trance condition. The personality disintegrates and divides itself, and then the personality vanishes. Sometimes you find in certain person plurality of personality. Thus, at one time, the person behaves like one person, and at another time like an entirely distinct

individual. The other day I was reading about a girl who had ten personalities and who had created a great sensation in England. But these different personalities are only the different manifestations or expressions of the latent impressions that are dormant in the subconscious mind or subliminal self. When they rise above the threshold and appear on the conscious plane, they manifest themselves in different individuals, but we must not think that ten souls take possession of that girl. No, it is the same person, the same individual soul, who possesses these powers and different personalities, because personality is nothing but a kind of garment, a clothing, a thinner and finer psychic garment of the soul. Personality is not eternal, but the individual self is eternal. People in this country (America) make a great mistake as regards the personality and individuality of the soul. The word *personality* comes from the Latin word *persona* means *mask*, that is, "the covering"; and the first covering of the soul is the thought body which we call the subtle body or *Suksma Shariram*. That may change. You may throw away one subtle body and take another, as in a dream you can take an entirely different personality. A man may become a woman in a dream or a woman a man, but all these are the uprising or uprush of the latent impressions of the subconscious mind, and they are visualized, so our present personality will not last for ever. We need not fret about it. The soul is sexless. Some people

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think we are male or female and we shall remain like this for ever. No, that is not so. The soul can take a male form or a female form. Of course, there is a law which governs it, the law of desire, the predominance of certain powers and desires that determine our sexes; but the soul itself, or the mind itself, is sexless.

Then Telekinesis is another remarkable psychic power. It means the power of moving heavy bodies. At one time I was the guest of a friend, a doctor in Boston, who possesses this unusual power. There was a heavy, old-fashioned dining-table; three or four persons could not lift it. After dinner he called me to sit with him at the same table, so I sat down while he put his hands on the table and asked me to do the same. There was no one else present, except his wife. She stood at a distance, and we two sat at the head of the table and put our hands on the table; after a short time the table began to crack, and I looked at him. He was perfectly self-possessed and was talking with me. He said: "Do you see this?" I said: "Yes. What is it?" He said: "The table is coming apart."¹ And when that noise stopped the table began to move all around and came so fast towards us that we were finally pushed against the wall, there we stopped. My friend is a well-known

1. C. Flammarion also says: "I have so often seen a rather heavy table lifted to a height of eight, twelve, sixteen inches from the floor, and I have taken such undeniably-authentic photographs of these; * * ."—*Cf. Mysterieuses Psychic Forces*, p. 5.

physician and does not believe in spiritualism or the possession by spirits, still he has this power. He asked me how I could explain it. I said that it was the power of *Prâna*, and that power of *Prâna* can move the world, it is moving the world, it is everywhere, and when it is manifested by any particular instrument of the human body it can do wonders.²

The power of mental healing is another great psychic power, and we know that this power is demonstrated scientifically by men and women of different countries; in fact, the Faith-healers, Mental-healers, Christian Scientists, Divine-healers and all other kinds of healers manipulate the same kind of power and cure diseases. The mind can create diseases and all those diseases that can be created by the mind can also be cured by the mind. It is a fact that you can get a blister on your skin if you can concentrate upon any particular spot. You know of the stigmata that St. Francis d'Assisi and many others had. That was not by the grace of Jesus the Christ; any body can get them by concentration. In olden times we did not understand the mental powers; we thought that these powers came directly from Heaven, but now we know that they are the powers of the subliminal self, or subconscious mind. These psychic powers have been exhibited in India from very ancient times. They have been studied carefully and have

2. Cf. also Swami Abhedânanda: *Our Relation to the Absolute*, p. 56.

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been developed into a science. They are called in Sanskrit *Siddhis*. *Siddhi* means accomplishment on the psychic plane, and a person who possesses these powers is called the possessor of *Siddhâi*; it may be possessed by a man or a woman.

Those who have read the *Pâtanjala* philosophy will remember that in the aphorisms of its third chapter various powers and psychic phenomena are described, and these powers can be attained by psychic Yogîs. There are some, of course, who are born with certain psychic powers, fully developed, while with others these powers are latent, and the science of Râja Yoga claims that these powers are latent in all human beings. Every one possesses them because these powers belong to the Cosmic or the subconscious mind, or whatever you may call it. Our minds and our bodies are merely the channels through which these powers manifest.

By ordinary individuals these powers are not manifested because in them its door is closed; but anyone who wishes to develop these powers can do so by going through certain exercises, by following the instructions of a psychic Yogî, and by practising those instructions faithfully. A psychic Yogî says that the power of concentration is the key of the realm of psychic phenomena. We know very little of this power of concentration—the concentrated force of the mind substance. It will create wonders, and any person who possesses this power of concentration fully developed, can easily become absolute master of the psychic realm, can

bring all other forces of nature under control and make them obey him as their lord and master. A psychic Yogî can know his past and future. He can read the past events of one's life and prognosticate the future. Of course, it is a very unusual thing, and when this power is manifested in a man we call him a prophet. There have been many such prophets; no particular religion can claim that it alone has produced prophets and that no other religion has. You go to the Mohammedans and ask them how many prophets they had, you go amongst the Buddhists, amongst the Hindus, the Chinese, and Thibetans,—you will find that each of these religion has produced a great many prophets. We do not know of them because we have not read their history; we do not care to read, we are busy with our own affairs; but a comparative study of religions will show that every religion has produced a great many prophets. There are living prophets, and in every age we find such great psychic Yogis.

A psychic Yogî can understand the meaning of the sounds of wild animals who have a language of their own. Those who have read Rudyard Kipling's *Second Jungle Book* will remember the most remarkable instance of the psychic Yogî named Puran Bhagat. He was a great official at one time, and then renounced everything and went to live in a cave in the Himâlayas. At one time he met a wild deer, heard the sound of that deer, understood its meaning, and in consequence

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saved the lives of the sleeping population of a whole village in the Himâlayas from an immediate, terrible and most destructive landslide, which wiped out the whole village in a few minutes. In the middle of the night he went to the village on hearing the sound of the deer and awakened the sleeping population, and thus saved their lives, and the deer was the cause of it. You see, what we cannot understand on account of our limitations can be noticed by wild animals instinctively, and that instinct is nothing but the power of the subconscious mind. The lower animals have minds, they have feelings, and they have subconscious mind and sometimes, knowing beforehand what is going to happen, they get frightened when we do not; and there are many other instances of such psychic phenomena in India.

A psychic Yogî can make himself disappear in the midst of a crowd in broad daylight. This is one of the powers which you do not ordinarily find. There have been several instances of such psychic Yogîs who have disappeared from close confinement, under constant watch, and appeared elsewhere outside of the room. They can make their bodies, as they claim, like cotton-wool, and pass through space. It seems absurd, but they claim that they can do it. A psychic Yogî can state exactly the hour and minute when he will pass out of his body and can prove it by experiment. I heard of several instances of psychic Yogîs who announced that they would pass out of the body

on such a day at such an hour. They were in perfect health; but they invited their friends, gave away all the things that they wished to distribute, fed their guests, prepared their own coffins, told where they wanted to be buried, and exactly at the hour named passed out of the body. In fact, these psychic Yogîs can die at any time they want; they know the process of death, and how a Yogî can get out of the body with full consciousness. Then, the psychic Yogî can communicate with discarnate spirits and bring them under control. A spiritualist is under the control of certain spirits, but in India you will find that these psychic Yogîs bring whatever they wish, without controlled by them. That power has not been developed by any spiritualist here (in America) that I know of.

A psychic Yogî, by gaining mastery over his nerve-centres, can make his body light in weight, can walk on thorns bare-footed, or on burning fire, and will not sink in water. You have read of amazing instances of Yogîs going through burning fire in some pagan initiations which are described in certain books, and they can do it. How do they do it? Not only they walk on fire, they also walk over the water, by making their bodies light and raising themselves above the surface. It is a power which counteracts the tremendous force of gravitation.

You have heard of levitation, and that power is generated by certain practices. For instance, if you practise Râja Yoga for a certain length of

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time and go through certain processes, you will be lifted right up from the chair on which you are sitting and thrown perhaps on your face, perhaps on your side. That is the reason why students are advised to sit on the floor and thus avoid that danger, and many of the students here have proved this fact. What power throws you off the chair? The power is only the partial manifestation of that tremendous force which counteracts gravity, and so the psychic Yogis can lift themselves into the air and walk. The same power makes them walk on the surface of the water. It makes them light. You hear of the wonderful power which Jesus the Christ showed when he walked on the surface of the water, but this is one of the common powers of the psychic Yogi. A psychic Yogi can also remember, by the power of his concentration, many of his incarnations or births, and it is said that Buddha remembered five hundred of his previous births.

A psychic Yogî is one who is advanced far enough in the psychic realm to possess eight wonderful powers of phenomena. He can make his body as small as a minute particle; he can make himself as light as cotton wool, and walk on the surface of the water, on thorns, on burning fire, as Jesus did, and as some disciples of Buddha and of Sankarâcharya, the great commentator of the Vedânta philosophy, did. Then there is another power by which they can make themselves huge and extremely heavy. Five or ten persons cannot

lift them. By still another power a psychic Yogî gets whatever he wishes, controls whatever he wants, makes the laws of nature obey his commands, and fulfills his desires by his will-power. We often hear of the allegorical story of a man, sitting under the tree of the fulfilment of desires, which they say is in heaven. He wished for certain things;—that he might have the delicious dishes of an emperor, and many attendants to serve him, and all these delicious dishes appeared and he ate of them. Then he wished for girls to come and play music and entertain him, and the damsels appeared; but as he was enjoying this, it flashed through his mind, what if at that time a tiger came, and immediately a tiger came and swallowed him up. This shows what is possible. Whatever we desire, we get; and in a certain state, a Yogî can fulfill his desires by his will.

In describing these psychic powers, however, Râja Yoga says that they are not desirable. Although the psychic Yogî is free from all diseases and pains, can live as long as he wishes, and is not subject to death; still Râja Yoga says that these powers are obstacles in the path of spirituality. Psychic phenomena are not the signs of spiritual progress or God-vision; it is progress on the psychic plane; and there are a great many instances given in India of those who possess psychic powers. One of them is this: A young man who was very anxious to possess certain psychic powers left his home, his parents and brothers and went out in

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the forest in search of a psychic Yogî. After a long time he discovered one. In India, of course, we have large forests, and people who develop these powers seek a secluded place where they can go and stay undisturbed and practise. So, this young man went to the Yogî, became his disciple and lived with him for fourteen years, following his instructions very closely and practising exactly as he was told. One day he went to bathe in a river and suddenly discovered to his great amazement that he did not sink, that he walked on the water. He told his master, who was very much pleased to see that his disciple had accomplished something. Then the disciple thought he had gained exactly what he wanted, and he wished to make a show of it. So, he left his master and came home to surprise his brother, who asked him what he had gained. He said: "Brother, come with me to the river-side; I will show you what I have gained". When they went this young psychic Yogî showed his brother by walking over the surface of the water of the river. In the meantime, his brother took a ferry-boat and went on the other side by paying a penny. Then, when they reached the other shore, the brother asked this young psychic Yogî: "My dear brother, how did you acquire this wonderful power?" His brother answered: "Why, I have gone through tremendous hardships and privations I have practised for fourteen years without eating or drinking much, and without sleeping." Then his brother, who had

a little common-sense said: "What a pity! You have spent so much time and energy and have gone through so much trouble to get that which is worth a penny! How foolish you have been."¹

Psychic powers are glorified by those who are on the plane of worldliness; they are great powers in the eyes of the world. Worldly people admire and run after them, but the great spiritual teachers do not care for them. On the contrary, they consider them as great obstacles in the path of spirituality; they do not deny their existence; they admit it, but at the same time they say that, if you pay attention to these powers, you will not rise on the higher plane of Godconsciousness, you will remain confined within the psychic realm. It is for this reason that Jesus the Christ, Buddha, Râmakrishna, and other great spiritual leaders of mankind, forbade their disciples to make any demonstration of psychic power or psychic phenomena, but taught them to obey the true spiritual laws by rising above psychic nature.

Those who care for name, fame, and worldly prosperity may run after psychic powers and exercise them for their selfish motives, but the true seekers after spiritual perfection never crave them but shun them as obstacles and as the source of bondage and self-delusion. He is truly spiritual who wishes to rise above nature; who transcends all psychic powers and struggles hard to enter into the realm of Divinity which is beyond the plane of psychic phenomena.

1. Cf. also Swâmi Abhedânanda: *Our Relation to the Absolute*, pp. 67-68.

CHAPTER II

PRANA AND THE HEALING POWER

Our earthly life consists in a continued adaptation to environments. A living substance is that which is capable of adapting itself to its surroundings and the very moment when it completely fails to do so, it is dead. The more perfect the adaptation, the more perfect is the manifestation of life. All vegetable, animal, and human life is subject to this great law of adaptation. This law manifests itself and governs every step of the existence, growth, evolution and development of a living creature. That power by which an organism can adapt itself to its environments is not a mechanical power, not merely a chemical force, but it is what we understand by the word life-force or vital energy. Wherever there is the manifestation of this life-force there is a natural tendency to bring a perfect harmony with the surrounding condition as well as with the laws that govern them. This tendency is to be found in all living beings, in every department of nature, whether vegetable, animal or human. Therefore, the fulfilment of this tendency, the establishment of a perfect harmony with the environment and obedience to the natural laws are implied in the meaning of adaptation, and these are the products of the life-force or vital energy.

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The normal manifestation of the life-force under favourable environments, creating perfect harmony with them and obeying the laws that govern them, is the state which is ordinarily understood by the common expression *health*; or, in other words, *health* means life under natural conditions, where the law of adaptation and other laws that govern the environments are not violated in the least. But if these laws be violated, if the conditions be abnormal, and if the adaptation be imperfect, then the result will be lack of health, or that state which is meant by such expressions as ill-health, sickness, or disease—all of which mean lack of health. Disease is not a real entity, which stands outside of ourselves as the enemy of health and attacks us from time to time, as some people may think; but it is simply an imperfect manifestation of life-force under abnormal conditions. It does not take possession of us from outside, but it is produced by the inability of the life-force to adapt itself to its environments and to obey the laws of nature. In order to adapt ourselves to our surrounding conditions, whether internal or external, we need a certain amount of energy and force, and when that amount decreases, either by waste or dissipation, or by lack of proper nourishment, or by the violation of the hygienic laws, then we grow weak and consequently become unable to resist the environmental influences which are constantly working against earthly existence and are trying to crush it; then we succumb under

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the pressure and become subject to various ailments. For example, when the temperature of the atmosphere is low, if we cannot adapt ourselves to that external change by getting enough of warmth, our system will be affected; we shall catch cold or be frozen. If the food be too rich or unwholesome, our system will try its best to assimilate it, but if it fails, then the result will be indigestion. If water which we drink contains germs or impure substances, they will enter into our system and try to dwell there, produce various symptoms of abnormal conditions which our system will naturally struggle to throw off and recover its normal condition.

If there be enough of life-force, the organs will destroy all the germs of disease, all the microbes and bacteria which are constantly entering into our bodies through breath, food and drink, as well as through the pores of the skin, and attacking the cells and tissues. An abundance of life-force is necessary to resist their influences or to drive them away or to kill them and eventually bring back the normal condition, which we understand as health. No disease can arise in the system if there be a sufficient amount of life-force, and if the cells are able to resist the influences of the common environments. The life-force has the primary tendency to preserve itself. This tendency for self-preservation is manifested not only by the individual being, but also by every organ, every tissue, nay, by every minute cell of the whole

organism. Propelled by this force, each cell acts instinctively, as it were, to protect its normal or healthy state and to remove all such obstacles as stand in its way. If any part of the body be wounded or injured, immediately the minute cells which are floating in the blood begin to work with extra force to remove that obstacle, to attack that enemy, and to recover the normal state of that part. As in a bee-hive, when any part is injured, thousands of bees will rush to attack and drive the enemy, to repair and restore the natural state of the hive, so when the body receives any injury, or when any germ enters the system and attacks the cells, the other cells rush forward with tremendous force and fight against the enemy; and if they succeed in driving that enemy away or killing that germ, the health or normal condition of the body is restored; but if they fail, the result will be pain, aches, or disease. Each cell possesses that life-force or power by which it preserves itself and heals the wound. Ordinarily, we say that the healing power is generated by drugs and medicines which are given by physicians, but do they impart the healing power to us? Take a concrete example. When a bone is broken, what does the medical surgeon do? He simply sets it in its proper place, and with the help of the bandage keeps it in the same position for a few days. The mending and repairing are done by nature. But what do we mean by nature? Nothing else but the life-force or vital energy which dwells in the organs

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and cells. No other force of nature than the life-force can accomplish this task. It is the healing power of nature which manifests itself in the human body in the same manner as in all animals and vegetables. When the bark of a tree is scratched or torn the same life-force of the tree heals it and makes it perfect. The healthy condition of the body is the result of the normal activities of the vital energy or life-force. We all know that if the life-force or vital actions are perfect, a man can easily recover from any injury or disease however malignant it may be. But when the vital force is wasted, the nervous system is run down, the recovery becomes much more difficult, and recuperation is impossible when the life-force is impaired or extremely weakened or compelled to work continuously under adverse conditions.

No disease will ever arise if free scope is given to the vital energy or life-force to act under proper conditions. On the other hand, limit its scope and provide adverse conditions, the life-force will naturally take vigorous measures to overcome or remove the obstacles. The results of this effort will appear in the form of aches and pains, and, eventually failing to resist and recover the normal activities, the organism will die under heavy pressure, producing the symptoms of incurable disease.

Thus we can understand that nature has supplied us with a certain amount of healing power. This

power dwells in every form of living substance. But its quantity varies in different individuals; some have tremendous power of healing; others have little. A healthy child possesses an abundance of life-force. If a bone is broken or any organ is injured, it will be cured in a shorter time than in a grown-up person whose life-force is wasted by dissipation.

In the science of Yoga, this healing power of nature is called *Prâna*. It is a Sanskrit term, meaning life-force, or vital energy, sometimes translated the *breath of life*. That breath of life, which is described in the *Genesis*¹: "And the Lord God had formed a man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"; and again in the *Book of Job*: "The Spirit of God hath made me and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life²," does not mean merely the atmospheric air which enters into the nostrils, but it means the life-force, or *Prâna*. It does not signify that a specific quantity of air was bottled up in the human system by God at the time of our birth which must be exhausted before death comes, but it means the power of *Prâna*, which is the source of life, the cause of the respiratory process and the producer of vital actions.

According to the science of breath, each living soul possesses the power of *Prâna*, by which are caused the activities of the motor and sensory nerves.

1. *The Genesis*, Ch. II, V. 7.

2. Cf. Chapter XXXIII, V. 4.

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The nerve-currents which travel through these nerves are produced by the vibration of *Prâna*. The nerve-centres in the spine are the storehouses of this life-force where it is generated and kept; in case of emergency this life-force goes through the different parts of the body, distributing the healing powers. The more we can store up this power of *Prâna*, the stronger we shall be physically and mentally. He who possesses sufficient quantity of this breath of life or *Prâna* has perfect health and enormous vitality and strength, which he can impart to others if he wishes to do so.

This is the secret of magnetic healing. The loss of *Prâna*, or nerve-force, is the cause of nervous prostration and of all other diseases. He who has gained mastery over this breath of life can consciously direct the healing power of *Prâna* to the diseased part, generate new vibrations in the cells of those parts and by the higher breathing exercises, destroying the cause of the disease, he can easily gain perfect health and strength. He can bring health and strength constantly to every part of his body. By polarizing the activities of the cells he will remove the obstacles that prevent the normal vibration of the vital current of those cells. The cells are moving in certain directions, but he can make them all obey his will-power, and then he can do anything with them and cure all diseases. But an ordinary person who has no control over the breath of life cannot do it. A true Yogi claims

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that he can gain mastery over this breath of life and can cure all diseases—of course, such diseases as have not produced decomposition or disorganization; but all other diseases in the preliminary stages can be cured by these higher breathing exercises. The breathing exercises will bring actual control over this nerve-force and they will help us to draw *Prâna* from the atmospheric air, from food and water, because this life-force is all-pervading.

The manifestation of this force is only to be found through the nerve-centres and nerves; therefore, if we know the secret of drawing life-force, or *Prâna*, into our system, from the atmosphere, since the quantity of air, which passes through our lungs, possesses *Prâna* and if we can extract it and store it in the nerve-centres, then we can use it at any time when it is needed.

Nature possesses it, but no individual can give it, unless that individual possesses a superabundance of *Prâna*. Therefore, when we go to a healer he may give it and we may feel better for the time being, but as soon as it is used up, we shall be obliged to return to him once again. The true Yogî, however, says if you know the method by which you can manufacture that life-force in yourself, then there will be no need of your going to others and borrowing it from them.

Christian Scientists, Faith Healers and Mental Healers can cure diseases without using drugs, but

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if they knew the secret of manufacturing the life-force or *Prâna* through the breathing exercises, as taught by the Yogîs of India, they would surely gain more marvellous results. Having learnt the secret of manufacturing the power or life-force, a Yogî says that one can easily become master of his body and mind. A Yogî can cure diseases by the power of touch or by the power of command, by simply saying: "Be thou cured, be thou healed;" such instances of instantaneous cures can be found in all countries. Jesus the Christ was one who possessed the power of command, Buddha and Srî Râmakrishna also had this power.

The power which is developed through the breathing exercises will produce wonderful results in a very short time. Those who know the secret of manufacturing and storing away the *Prâna* possess perfect health. But this cannot be achieved in a day or in a month; it will require some time to gain that mastery over the breath of life; it will also require an absolute self-control. One should live a pure and chaste life and should learn the secret of transmuting the nervous energy and sex energy into the will-power by practising the higher breathing exercise of a Yogî.

In order to cure diseases, we must wield a tremendous will power. There are Yogîs who can cure diseases by simply willing and their will never fails, and that will-power can be strengthened and increased by the breathing exercises. This

development of life-power is one of the ideals of a Yogî or a student of the science of breath. The first effect of successful breathing exercises is the control of the nerves, or what we call freedom from nervousness, as well as from all diseases which proceed from nervous disorder. Physical strength will be almost unlimited and the person will be so strong and so hardy that he will not be easily affected by sudden changes of weather, nor by hunger or thirst; a small quantity of food or drink will be enough to produce great results. Any one who practises the breathing exercises faithfully will gain highly beneficial results both in body and mind. He will remove all impurities from his system and overcome all abnormal and diseased conditions. He will no longer be subject to rheumatism, stiffness of joints or muscles, paralysis and other ills, for the higher vibrations of *Prâna* will destroy their causes. Every individual, whether young or old, man or woman, is bound to get some result if the exercises be properly practised for six months. He is furthermore sure to cure mental *dis-ease*, that is, a restless state of mind. He will be master of his senses, as well as of passions and animal desires. He will conquer anger, hatred, anxiety, jealousy, worry, by raising the vibration of *Prâna* on the higher plane of psychic activity.

This *Prâna* produces the will-power, and this will-power is the highest manifestation of power, and spiritual power will also come to him who has

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gained absolute mastery over himself. Thus gradually conquering hunger and thirst, gaining mastery over his body, mind and senses, he will live in the world like a true Yogî; then he will know what this breath of life is and how wonderful is the healing power of *Prâna*.

CHAPTER III

THE MAGNETIC HEALING

The healing power of *Prâna* is manifested by those who are known in America and Europe as magnetic healers. They may not know that the so-called personal magnetism is nothing but the expression of the same life-force which is called *Prâna* by the Yogîs of India. From very ancient times the Hindu Yogîs have cured most malignant and incurable diseases by exercising this natural healing power upon the patients either by blowing their breath through the mouth upon the diseased part or by laying their hands upon it or by simply touching it with their fingers. A similar method was adopted by Jesus the Christ when he touched the eyes of the two blind men and healed them. It is said in the *St. Matthew*: "Then touched he their eyes, saying 'According to your faith be it unto you.' And their eyes were opened".¹ Again, "So Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight."²

There have been innumerable cases of similar cures performed by the Yogîs from ancient times down to the present day among the people of India. Whenever the physicians give up any case as hope-

1. Cf. *St. Matthew*, Ch. IX, 29-30.

2. *Ibid.*, Ch. XX, 34.

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less and incurable, if the patient has the good fortune to find such a Yogî healer he is sure to receive a miraculous demonstration of the healing power of *Prâna*, or of magnetic healing. There are, of course, healers of all kinds in India who go about from place to place healing the sick and curing various sorts of ailments and organic diseases.

Some of these Yogî healers would blow their breath of *Prâna* in a glass of water or upon a flower or upon a pinch of the dust of the ground and through this medium they would transmit their healing power to the patient. For instance, if the water charged with *Prâna* might be taken internally or applied externally or sprinkled upon the wound, it would produce miraculous effects.

There are other magnetic healers in India who use the method of making passes over the person suffering from various diseases, and thus transmitting the magnetic currents of *Prâna* charged with its curative powers. They know how to control these currents and direct them wherever they desire. The ordinary methods of magnetic healing are: The rubbing of the hand upon the body, the stroking of the body with fingers, the kneading of the flesh and muscles of the patient, and the so-called *massage* and *osteopathic* treatments. These have been adopted by the Yogîs, magnetic healers of ancient and modern India.

Most people in Christendom believe that the healing

power is a special gift bestowed by God upon the disciples and followers of Christ, but the Science of Yoga teaches that it is the gift of the life-force (*Prâna*) to all individuals. In some it is more abundant than in others. But the Yogîs understand the hidden law of healing and therefore they can heal the sick and cure all diseases in the same way as Jêsus did two thousand years ago.

It is such a common thing in India that people would walk hundreds of miles to pay a visit to a Yogî and to have their diseases cured. Therefore, whenever a Yogî becomes famous as a healer hundreds of patients would flock around him day and night to receive his blessing.

Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna possessed wonderful healing powers but he seldom exercised them. Once I witnessed his marvellous power of instantaneous healing which he demonstrated upon his beloved disciple Narendra (*Vivekânanda*). One morning Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna came with his disciples to Râm Babu's house. The gathering was very large and the great Master took his seat and glanced around and enquired: "Where is Narendra?" Râm Babu said that Narendra had severe congestion in his brain and was lying in bed in a dark room, with ice water on his head, and could not bear the light. The great Master wanted to see Narendra and asked some of his disciples to bring him there. Thereupon, I along with his other disciples went to Narendra's home which was in the neighbourhood. We went to the dark room

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and saw him lying on a bed with a wet towel on his head, and he was suffering terribly. He had tried everything without any relief. We gave him the Master's message. He said that he was sorry, but that it was impossible for him to go out in the light and furthermore he was too sick to be in a crowd. We all urged him again and again, and persuaded him to come with his head and eyes covered with a wet cloth, and led him by his arms along the way. He said the pain in his head was so severe that it was as if some one was pushing his skull with a crowbar from within. Râmakrishna was delighted to see Narendra who bowed at his holy feet and received his blessings. The great Master touched Narendra's head and said: "My boy, what is the matter with your head?" Instantly Narendra was healed, and everyone was struck with wonder at this marvellous cure of such a serious illness. Narendra sat there in the midst of that large gathering and sang ecstatic songs with the accompaniment of musical instruments, hearing which the great Master remained in deep *Samâdhi*, Godconsciousness. For four hours he sang steadily without feeling any ill-effect from this tremendous exertion.

Another instance I also remember that one day Lâtu Mahârâj (Swâmi Adbhutânanda), a lady disciple of Srî Râmakrishna (Golâp Mâ) and I on a boat with Srî Râmakrishna were returning from Calcutta to Dakshineswar. It was half past two, nearly afternoon. We all felt very hungry; the

Master too was hungry. In order to purchase something to eat we cast the anchor of the boat at the Barâhanagar ghât. There was only a one-anna coin with that lady disciple (Golâp Mâ). I took that coin and set out. After a while I came back to the Master with a small quantity of sweets. The Master took that quantity from me and fully ate it up. Then he drank some water from the Ganges with his folded hands. We did not get a grain even to eat and so we began to look at each other. But just immediately after we felt no more hungry and our stomachs were really filled up.¹

1. We mention here another authentic record from *Râmakrishna-Lilâprasanga* by Swâmi Sâradânanda, another Apostle of Sri Râmakrishna. "One day Sri Râmakrishna took Narendra Nâth (Swâmi Vivekânanda) to a private place in the Panchavati, where he underwent severe austerity for years and attained to the realization of Truth. The Master told his great disciple: 'Look here, my disciple, by the grace of the Divine Mother I have acquired the miraculous powers (*Asta-Siddhî*). But as I am totally forgetful of even the very garment on my own body how can I make use of them. So, I am thinking to give away them to you with the permission of the Mother. Because the Mother has informed me long ago that you have been destined to serve Her many works in future. If those powers are infused in you then you can use them to serve various purposes. What is your opinion about it?'"

"Since his first visit to the Master Narendra Nâth had the opportunity to witness his many supernatural powers. So, he had no ground of disbelieving them. After much consideration he asked the Master whether those supernatural powers would help him to realize God. The Master replied: 'Although these miraculous powers will not prove helpful yet when you after seeing God will be

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Bhagavân Sñî Râmakrishna, however, healed the sick souls, took their sins away and lifted them up into the realm of Godconsciousness by a single touch or glance and thus struck the sword of wisdom at the root of all evil and made them whole.

engaged in doing His works these powers will help you very much.' On hearing this Narendra Nâth told the Master: 'No, Sir, I do not want them. Let me first realize God then I shall consider whether they should be accepted or not. If I get possession of these powers before my spiritual perfection, if I forget God using these powers recklessly out of selfish motive then I shall be overtaken by ruin.'

"Sñî Râmakrishna was glad beyond measure to see the total aversion of his worthy disciple to these miraculous powers and blest him."—P.

CHAPTER IV

I

SCIENCE OF MENTAL HEALING

Most intimate is the relation between the mind and the body. Whoever possesses a clear idea of this relation can solve the mystery of earthly existence and explain the power of mind over body. From ancient times various thinkers and teachers have given different theories as to the origin of life and mind, and those theories have been the foundation of different systems of philosophy, religion, and also of the various cults known under different names. But there are others again who hold the materialistic theory of life and mind. 'The theory' of spontaneous manifestation of life and mind of the modern biologists does not explain the real origin of life and mind, but simply shuts off all investigations of earnest seekers after truth in the vast field of mental and psychical realm which is at present unknown to us.

The materialistic thinkers who regard mind as a function of the brain are satisfied with the belief that all mental powers are but the results of the organic activities of the nervous system and the brain. The medical practitioners who still believe in the materialistic theory of life and mind regard the human body as a machine, as a chemical vat.

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All the activities and organic functions are the results of material forces and chemical actions of matter, which are governed by mechanical laws; and when there is any abnormal condition or disease, they maintain that it can be remedied by chemical and mechanical means. Consequently, they resort to the drug cure, which is based upon chemistry and its implications.

These practitioners have banished mind entirely from the medical field as either a cause or a factor in the healing process, and have kept it as an effect of the organic function, especially of the brain. As the liver would secrete bile, so brain secretes ideas and thoughts, and if the brain is diseased or disordered, the mind is affected. The mind as an entity is not considered a reality. Consequently, they seek salvation in drugs, which are material particles that must be put together in order to produce a chemical effect. They regard medicine as the panacea for all diseases, which in their opinion are nothing but the derangements of normal chemical process. They do not accept the theory of the mind or soul as an entity. They say that consciousness is the result of the activity of the brain cells, and explain it this way: As a piece of metal in a furnace produces heat, first red and then white glow, so the nerve cells when heated produce a glow which is our consciousness.¹ There-

1. Cf. Swâmi Abhedânanda: *Life Beyond Death*, pp. 12-14 & *Our Relation to the Absolute*, pp. 17-24.

fore, they say that all the causes of disease are physical, and that the remedy must be found in the domain of physical matter. They deny the existence of the vital force as distinct from the other forces of nature, as well as the power of suggestion.

But the advanced thinkers of this age have witnessed the wonderful cures of diseases performed by mental healers and spiritual healers who go about under different names, and who do not use drugs. They are forced to admit that mind has a tremendous power over the nerves, tissues, cells and the organs of the whole physical body. There are some scientists, physiologists and medical practitioners, like Dr. Maudsley, Dr. Foster, Dr. Hammond,² Prof. Angelo Mosso, and others, who have investigated the relation between the mind and the body, and who have come to the conclusion that it is a fact that mental conditions affect our physical and organic functions. They maintain that the mind has power over the body and that it is not entirely the result of the activity of the brain. Brain is the seat of this something which we call mind or soul or conscious entity.

Moreover, it has been shown again and again by experiments upon lower animals that when the cerebral hemispheres were taken out, very little change in their general behaviour was produced.

2. Dr. Hammond, the great surgeon and the author of the work entitled, *The Brain Not the Sole Organ of the Mind*.

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Again, post-mortem cases recorded by Dr. Thomson in his work entitled, *Brain and Personality*, show that persons who had lost one-half of the brain by accident or disease performed all the mental functions with the other half without exhibiting any lack of mental powers and talents. Many other scientific proofs can be given in support of the argument that mind is not the same as the brain or any of its functions. But their relation is so intimate that few people can separate the mind or consciousness from the brain or physical body.

Every mental function produces corresponding physical changes in the system. We may say that there is "no psychosis without neurosis", or in other words "no mental change without a peculiar nervous state corresponding to it." In the same manner it can be shown that the mind or thought has the power of producing various abnormal conditions. For instance, anger and fear would affect the digestion, and the muscular actions of the heart. Worry breaks down the nerves. Nervous prostration is caused by mental worry and disappointment. Grief has a tremendous power over the physical organic functions. It destroys appetite. Darwin says of protracted grief: "The circulation becomes languid, the face pale, the muscles flacid; the eye-lids droop, the head hangs on the contracted chest, the lips, cheeks and lower jaw all sink downward by their own weight."

Again, the power of mental suggestion produces

wonderful effects upon the physical body.¹ Fifty years ago few people were acquainted with the power of the mind; but lately it has taken a great hold upon the minds of different practitioners. They consider that mental suggestion will create wonderful cures of all kinds of diseases. Some time ago, when I was in London, I saw a case of a girl who had a peculiar kind of disease which disabled her from keeping any food in her stomach. Whatever she ate she would throw out, and she was emaciated and very sick as she had no nourishment for a long time. Different physicians treated her with their various methods, but failed to cure her. At last she was sent to a healer who used mental suggestions to heal diseases. This mental healer made her gaze at the tip of his finger, which he held up for a few seconds, and put her in hypnotic sleep. Then he gave her the suggestion that she should eat the food which was placed before her. In her hypnotic sleep the girl ate some

1. Henry Wood also informs us: "Suggestion of some kind is the great mental motor. It may enter the human mind either in thought-waves projected by another mind, or through the avenue of an outer sense. Hypnotic suggestion stirs the mind on the sensuous plane by the dominant imposition of the force of another personality. Ideal Suggestion is the photographing of pure and perfect ideals directly upon the mind through the medium of the sense of sight. It is voluntary, and free from any admixture of personality or imperfection. By the cultivated vigour of thought-concentration it develops wonderful power and utility."—Cf. *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography*, p. 7.

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biscuits and drank a glass of milk. After a few minutes she was awakened. In the meantime, the table was cleared off and when she awoke she did not throw it out. This treatment was repeated day after day until she was completely cured. This illustrates how the power of suggestion of another mind works upon the subconscious mind of the patient and produces marvellous result.

Such cases have proved the truth of the power of suggestion which acts miraculously upon the non-volitional subconscious mind. This subconscious mind lies close to the border of the material plane. It has no volition of its own, and the cures by suggestion are like the effects of reflexes. The subconscious mind possesses unlimited powers and possibilities. It permeates the cells and tissues of the organs of the physical body and gives them life and vitality, and manipulates them according to its own caprice. Thus scientific experiments have been made to show that the power of mind creates wonders and miraculous cures in a great many cases.

The power of suggestion, again, is so tremendous that, as it can cure diseases, so it can produce diseases. An experiment was made upon a healthy young man who was going to his office in the morning: six of his friends put their heads together to give a suggestion to his mind, without letting him know that they were doing it. As he started out from his home, one of his friends who was standing at the street corner looked at him and said:

"How do you do? You look very sick; what is the matter with you? How strange you look today! Are you sick?" The young man replied: "No, I am very well; I have no trouble with me. I am all right." He went a short distance and met another friend who said: "Good morning. Why you look very sick? What is the matter with you? You are awfully sick." He said: "No, I am all right. What makes you say so?" "Well, I see you are changed. You are entirely different. You never looked like this before." The young man said: "No, you are all wrong. I am all right. I have good health and good appetite. I ate a good breakfast and am going to my office." A little further he found another friend, who said: "How do you do? You look very sick." Thus six friends held him up at different stations on his way to the office, and they all said the same thing. Then it got in his nerves. The young man went to his office and said to himself: "I do not feel very well now. What is the matter with me? All my friends say that I am sick. I must be sick." After a few hours he began to feel the effect and was convinced that he was sick with high fever. He stayed in bed and called for a doctor. The doctor came, but the man suffered for a time from the effect of these suggestions. Next day it was explained to him that it was all a joke, but the joke worked so seriously that he felt disgusted with his friends who played such a trick upon him.


However, this shows that the power of suggestion

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can produce diseases in the physical body. It can raise the temperature, change the circulation, increase the heart beat and the pulse and create other abnormal conditions.

Another experiment was made in England some time ago upon a man condemned to death. This man was placed on a table. His eyes were blindfolded and his limbs were strapped on the table so that he could not move. He was then told that every drop of his blood would be drained out of his system in a short time. An insignificant puncture was made on the skin of his neck with a needle, and a siphon was arranged near his head in such a manner as to allow a stream of warm water to flow over his neck and fall with a little dripping sound into a basin on the floor. After six minutes that man died, believing that nearly seven or eight quarts of blood were drained out of his body.

Here let me mention another most remarkable instance of the power of mental suggestion. Doctor Wiggs of Leyman in Europe gave a suggestion to a young girl, after she was put into hypnotic sleep, that every Friday she would develop a red cross on her chest,—for three months. The subject did not know anything about this suggestion, but the next Friday true to the doctor's suggestion she developed a red cross on her chest. It was like a blood-blister in the form of a cross, and every Friday it appeared for three months. Now, think of the power of suggestion over the healthy cells and tissues of another's body! That suggestion


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worked like a miracle upon the organic functions, the blood circulation and the cellular activities of the nerves and nerve-centres of the whole system of the patient.

Similar results can be produced by auto-suggestion or concentration. By the power of strong concentration the Catholic saints, St. Francis of Assisi and others, produced stigmata in their hands and feet. Think of the power of mind over body! All such facts prove that mind is a principal factor in our physical existence and that body follows suggestions, ideas, thoughts, emotions and feelings of the mind. Mind is the creative power within us. And that mind is neglected by those medical men who consider that this physical body is nothing but a machine and that the mind is but the effect of the organic functions of the brain and the nerve centres.

The mental healers, however, are now demonstrating every day that the latent power of the mind can produce a great many diseases in the system and also can cure many of them. Today, the closer study of the mental powers in a man has revealed the truth that the greatest curative principle dwells in the individual, and it can be directed by the will. We do not have to get it from outside. It is already in us.

Before I came to the West, for twelve years I, myself, demonstrated the power of mind over body. During this period, as a *Sannyâsin* monk I travelled from place to place all over India, living on one

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scanty meal of a few pieces of unleavened bread in hours, and walking twenty-five or thirty miles a day, sleeping anywhere under trees, along the roadside, in rain or sunshine. Once I walked barefoot on glacier ice, on snow above 16,000 feet in the Himâlaya mountains, without feeling ill effects of the frost at any time. I warded off mountain sickness by the power of the mind. I stayed at the source of the Ganges for three months at the height of 14,000 feet and used to plunge every morning in the river where blocks of ice were floating all around, yet I never caught cold or suffered from any sickness during this long period of severe hardship and privation.

Once, to test the power of mind over body, I prayed for sickness and my prayer was fulfilled abundantly within three days. I had high fever, bronchitis, dysentery, and was laid up for six months. All these personal experiences have convinced me of the truth of the Vedânta teaching: "Mind is the creator of the world, and mind is the real man; whatever a man does, is done by the mind; the body cannot do anything."¹

Î In the *Yogavâshistha* we find it is mentioned:

(a) "*Manomâtramato visvam yadyajâtam tadeva hi.*"
III. 66. 11.

(b) *Samastam kalpanâmâtramidam Visvam nâstyeva mananâdrite.*

* * * * *

Manomananânirmânamâtramatajjagatrayam.

Manovijrimbhanadidam samsâra iti sammatam."—
III. 44. 20-21, 110. 48.

Again, in studying the different steps of the evolutionary process of the animal forms from the lower to the higher stages, up to the highest man, we find that mind antedates the organs. The organic changes take place according to the desires of the mind. The desire to see has produced the organs of sight, the desire to eat has produced teeth, alimentary canal and digestive organs. The desire to hold has produced hands, and the desire to walk has made the muscles of the legs. If we do not use these organs for some time we shall forget how to use them. We shall have to learn like a child. If you watch a child when it begins to walk, you will see how it exerts its will power to control the muscles which would not at first obey the command of its mind. But by repeated efforts it succeeds in training them in the end.

When I was living in our Barânnagar monastery near Calcutta, India, on account of a serious operation on my foot I could not stand on my legs and was obliged to lie on my back for six months. During this period I forgot how to walk, and when I tried I could not; I had to learn to walk just like a child, putting my whole weight upon two friends and taking one step after another. It took some time before I could walk properly.

In the *Vivekachudâmani* we also find:

"Bhoktyâdi visvam mana eva sarvam.

*Ato manhkalpita eva pumsah samsâra na vastu-
ta'sti."*—Sl. 170-171.

Cf. also the *Mâdhyamika Kârîkâ* by Nagarjuna and *Man-
dukya-Kârîkâ* by Gaudapâda.

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This shows that our mind is the primary factor, the primary director to guide all the muscles, which are like servants. The cells of the muscles have memory and are governed by the mind. If the muscles did not possess memory we could not raise our hands twice in the same way, without making conscious efforts as we did in the beginning. Dr. Maudsley says: "The acquired functions of the spinal cord and of the sensory ganglia obviously imply the existence of memory, which is indispensable to their formation and exercise." He also says: "A ganglionic centre whether of mind, sensation or movement, which was without memory would be an idiotic centre incapable of being taught its functions."

Memory and mind are manifested in our organs, tissues and nerve centres in the whole system. Therefore, it is the mind that spreads out from the conscious plane down to the subconscious plane and controls the whole organism. If mind has created all these organs, it will be easy to understand that abnormal conditions of the body are but objectified mental conditions, and therefore, if the mental conditions are changed and brought into their normal state, the physical effects (which are known as diseases) will necessarily be changed. *This is the whole rationale of mental healing.*

Mental healing includes the healing by the power of suggestion, as well as the healing by changing the thought current of the individual. Of course,

if there be a habitual thought of any particular kind it will produce a chronic disease. Habitual lust is a disease; anger is a disease; hatred is a disease; jealousy is a disease; worry is a disease; grief and morbid states like melancholia and extreme passion,—these are all destructive forces which will create havoc in the system. Anger would produce bile, and if biles is secreted abundantly where would it go? It would go into the blood and the whole system would be poisoned.

Experiment has been made upon a cat. This cat was petted, made very happy and was given food. An X-ray photograph of her stomach showed that while she was purring her digestion was going on nicely and normally. But afterwards she was made angry, and the X-ray photograph showed that as soon as she was angry her digestion stopped at once and the liver began to secrete more bile. Consequently her whole system was disturbed.

It is a well-known scientific fact that the mother who nurses her babe in anger or under extreme passion generates poison in her system and feeds her babe with that poison. Naturally the babe would be sick. If the mother eats indigestible food, the baby will have colic. If, on the other hand, the mother's mind is happy, peaceful and contented, the little one will be strong and free from all sickness.

These facts were known among the Hindu teachers centuries before Jesus was born. It was not Jesus

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who first brought out the healing practices. History tells us that Appolonius of Tyna, who was a contemporary of Jesus, healed the sick and raised the dead. He went to India to learn the secret truths concerning life and death. The ancient Greek physician, Æsculapius, was the greatest healer of the age, and was proclaimed as the saviour of mankind. He also raised the dead and his healing powers continued to manifest even after his death. Many of the healings ascribed to Jesus were perhaps done by Æsculapius or Appollonius. Who can tell?

Even today you will find people who can perform wonderful cures amongst the Hindus, Moham-medans and Buddhists. Nearly two centuries before Christ, the Buddhist monks practised various methods of mental healing and were known as *Theraputta*. In Pâli *Thera* means 'calm and peaceful', and *putta* means 'son.' Therefore *Theraputta* originally meant 'Son or disciple of Buddha,' who practised mental healing. The English word "Therepeutic" can be traced back to its original Pâli form *Theraputta*. In the reign of the Buddhist Emperor Asoka, 260 B.C. the followers of Buddha went out as missionaries from Siberia to Ceylon and from China to Egypt to preach the Gospel of Buddha,¹ to heal the sick and

1. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge admits also: "Buddhism was carried into Syria and Egypt by the envoys of Chandragupta and his grandson Asoka in the third century B.C., and there is no doubt that it made its way into China before the

to show the way to perfection. Some of them came to Palestine, Syria, and Alexandria, taught the truth of mental and spiritual healing among the Essenes,² and established hospitals, not only for men, women and children but also for lower animals.

Lower animals can be made to feel the power of thought. Horses, dogs, cats, and pet birds always respond to any suggestion given to them by their masters. A horse is sensitive to the feelings

Christian Era. Professor Rhys Davids says that it penetrated to China 'along the fixed route from India to that country, round the north west corner of the Himâlays and across Eastern Turkestan. * * From this time Buddhism rapidly spread there. Monks from Central and North-Western India frequently travelled to China; and these Chinese themselves made many journeys to the Older Buddhist countries to collect the sacred writings, which they diligently translated into Chinese. In the fourth century Buddhism became the State religion"—Vide *Baralâm and Yewâsef*, pp. liii, lxxxiii.

Swâmi Abhedânanda says again in his *India and Her People* (p. 226): "Asoka, who lived in 260 B.C., had his edicts inscribed on pillars of stone during his lifetime, and in one of those edicts we read that he sent Buddhist missionaries to different parts of the world, from Siberia to Ceylon, from China to Egypt, and that, for two centuries before the advent of Jesus, the Buddhist missionaries preached the sublime ethics of Buddha in Syria, Palestine and Alexandria."—P.

2. The author well says again in his *India and Her People* (p. 227): "These preachers (Buddhist) influenced the Jewish sect known as the Essenes; * *. It can be shown that they (Essenes) belonged to the sect founded by the Buddhist monks from India, who lived in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt." Cf. also Renan: *Life of Jesus*, p. 128.—(—P).

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of his driver or rider. As with the animals so with the vegetables. Even plants are sensitive to the vibrations of human beings and can be influenced by the power of right thought. Some plants will die at the touch of persons who radiate destructive magnetic currents, while they will grow rapidly at the touch of others whose vibrations are good and constructive. Some of them are sensitive to our mental suggestions. The *Prânic* vibrations, or the vital currents that radiate from a person would affect others favourably or unfavourably in the process of their growth and manifestation of the life-force. It is a fact. You may experiment upon your surroundings and you will find that it is so. You may make a plant grow in one direction, produce blossoms upon one branch, or make it bear fruit upon one bough more than upon another bough by your powerful suggestions. Experiments have been made in this line and they have been found very successful.

Therefore, mental healing is a natural power. This power can be consciously directed to the subconscious mind of the patient. I have already explained that the subconscious mind possesses unlimited powers and possibilities. Its field is larger than the conscious mind.¹ Our conscious plane has a small area in which we have the feelings of *I*, *me* and *mine*. This conscious mind can control the

1. Cf. Swâmi Abhedânanda: *Our Relation to the Absolute*, pp. 44, 48.

the healing power of *Prâna* and can produce marvellous results in mental healing.

In mental healing the healer first holds the normal attitude or has a firm conviction that mind is the master of the body and the controller of all organic functions², and then transmits it to the mind of the patient. The thought currents rising from the mind of the healer will influence the subconscious mind of the patient, stimulate it and correct the effects of his abnormal mental conditions.

He is a successful mental healer who can concentrate his mind and form a clear mental picture of the patient as restored to perfect health, and transfer that picture to the patient's mind. Of course, the patient's mind during the treatment must be quiet and in a receptive attitude, with faith in the power of the healer. The healer may mentally talk to the patient, in case of absent treatment, and give suggestions of strength and perfect health, and send a strong current of the thought of love through the patient's mind, driving out all negative thoughts of sickness, weakness and ill health. The result will be a *marvellous* cure of malignant cases.

2. "Thought discipline and control is the key which unlocks spiritual storehouses of strength and attainment; and earnest desire and aspiration—which is "prayer without ceasing"—is the motor which furnishes power and intensity" of healing power.—Cf. Henry Wood: *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography*, p. 70.

II

SPIRITUAL HEALING.

There is another plane of consciousness in which the body idea vanishes and the true nature of our Spirit (*Atman*) is revealed¹. It is called the state of superconsciousness. It is the realm of the true Self which is the perfect Image of God. It is a state where the individual soul (*jivâtman*) comes in touch with the infinite Mind and infinite Spirit (*Brahman*) which is free from all disease, sorrow, suffering and all imperfection. In that state the power of the Spirit, which is the source of our mind

1. It is called the seventh plane of consciousness according to psychic science. As regards the planes of consciousness Henry Wood says: "The nature of man is complex. In the ascending evolutionary scale his physical organism stands upon the fifth great plane, having been preceded by the elementary, chemical, vegetable, and animal subdivisions. He is now evolving a spiritual faculty, which is regarded as a sixth plane or state of consciousness, and has within him the germ of a seventh, as a final supreme attainment. The sixth order or sense is also denominated the intuition; and the seventh, the divine, or Christ-plane, where man meets God and becomes at one with him.

"Some of the esoteric systems of the Orient find seven elements in Man, in the following ascending order: first, the physical organism; second, the vitality; third, the astral body; fourth, the animal soul; fifth, the intelligent or human soul; sixth, the spiritual soul; seventh the divine soul, or Godconsciousness. Other systems count but five grades or planes in the human economy, making the distinctions a little broader than those just enumerated."—Cf. *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography*, p. 65.

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and mentality, is manifested. All spiritual healing is produced by the individual self, after entering into the state of superconsciousness and communing with the infinite source of life and power.

The soul then becomes free from the limitations of time and space, transcends the realm of thoughts and other mental activities, and realizes its oneness with the supreme Spirit. The individual soul then becomes the channel through which the Divine powers of the omnipotent Being begin to flow and perform miraculous cures on the plane of sense-consciousness.

Our true Self is all-knowing and all-powerful. If we can once remove the obstacles and open the portal of superconsciousness and let the Divine Spirit manifest through our souls, then we shall be true spiritual healers, not only of our own physical and mental troubles but also of others.

The science of 'spiritual healing' embraces various methods of healing adopted by different schools of healers. In the first place it advocates the so-called natural methods of healing such as regulating the diet (food and drink), physical exercises and correct breathing. These are the most important things which we should observe, for they will help us in adjusting the physical details of our earthly existence and in creating proper conditions under which the power of the Spirit can be manifested on the physical plane. But if we neglect them and exercise the power of the mind, instead, we shall be taxing our mind unnecessarily and using up the

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vital energy in trying to remove the ills which have been caused by physical conditions and which can be removed very easily. Now, for instance, it is possible that you can sit in the draught and not take cold. Of course, you have to use a certain power to do that. The easiest way is to save that power and energy by not sitting in the draught. Save that energy for something else. This is a rational method. It does not make one a fanatic or a crank. Because mind can produce all these things, why should we tempt the mind, why should we tempt God? God has given us common sense, and it is the best sense, after all. We must exercise this common sense under all conditions. Therefore, when the normal states of the physical and vital actions of the individual are perfectly harmonious with the environments, the natural method of healing produces best results.

But these natural methods will not be sufficient to overcome the abnormal mental conditions such as anger, fear, hatred, jealousy, envy, malice, worry, lust, greed and other passionate emotions which affect our physical health and become causes of various diseases.

Here we should adopt any one of the various methods of mental healing known under different names. They all exercise the power of suggestion, although many of them do not analyze the psychological process of their mind, and some of them delude themselves by thinking that they can

work miracles. Some mental healers adopt the negative method of denying the existence of matter, sickness; disease, and death, and calling them errors or delusions of the mortal mind. This negative method will produce wonderful results. In case of sickness, deny it; call it unreal, a delusion (*Mâyâ*); deny the real existence of matter, and also the real existence of the body. This method is based upon the pure non-dualistic theory of Vedânta, and the idealistic theory of Bishop Berkeley and other idealistic philosophers, who deny the existence of matter, and believe that all material objects are nothing but ideas or thought form which exist in our minds. Therefore, matter has no separate existence from mind. Through this negative method of denial of matter and disease, many cases have been cured.

The secret of this method lies not in negative assertions like: "I am *not* sick," but in cultivating the opposite thought that disease is the effect of a wrong thought, that it is a delusion (*Mâyâ*), that it has no *real* existence. This wrong thought should be substituted with the *right* thought of the true Self (*Atman*) which is never sick; for Vedânta teaches: "This *thy* Self (*Atman*) is free from hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, old age and death¹.

1. "Ta Atmâ sarvân rarah katamo Yâjñavalkyasya sarvântaro
yo'shançyâpipâse shokam moham jarâm mrityumatyeti
etam vai tamâtmânam vidadvâ * *."—Bṛhadâraṇyaka
Upaniṣad, III. 5. 1.

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The man who knows 'I am He (*Atman*)', what could he wish and for what desire would he take the ills of the body upon himself²."

There are other healers who follow the positive method affirming "wholeness" and emphasize such statements as "I am whole," "I am well," "I am perfect," "I am healthy." They take the standpoint of the perfect Spirit which is realized in the superconscious state and try to manifest its qualities by affirmative suggestions. By this method the belief and thought currents of the patient's mind can be changed from sickness into a healthy state. Vedânta teaches: "The Self (*Atman*) has pervaded all, effulgent, incorporeal, scatheless, untouched by brain or nerves, pure, unaffected by evil, the Knower, omnipresent and self-existent."³ "When a man realizes this Self (*Atman*) as God and as the Lord of all that is and will be, then' he doubts no more."⁴ "Then there is no longer illness, old age or death for him who has obtained a body, produced by the fire of Yoga

2. "*Atmānam chedvijānīyādāyamsmīti puruṣaḥ. Kimicchan kasya kāmāya śarīramanusamjuaṣet.*"—Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad, IV. 4. 12.

3. "*Sa paryagāchhukṛa-makāya-mavṛana-masṇāvīram-śuddha-māpāpaviddham. Kavīrmanāsi paribhuk svayambhuryathātathyato'rthān vyadadhācchā śvātībhyah.*"—Isha Upanishad, 8.

4. "*Yadaitamanuṣaśkyīyātmanam devamanjaṣā. Ishānam bhūta-bhavyasya na tato vijugupsate.*"—Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad, IV. 4. 15.

(union with God).”⁵ Thus this positive method of affirmation will produce wonderful cures. As the negative method starts from one extreme, so the positive method starts from another extreme, but they both meet in the end at the same standpoint and produce similar results.

There are others again who advocate the metaphysical method of affirmation of “wholeness” and denial of evil. They partly deny and partly affirm; deny sickness and affirm at the same time: “I am not sick, I am well.” They assert: “I am whole, and there is no such thing as sickness or death.”

Here the healer makes one statement which is true from the standpoint of the Spirit which is never sick, while the sufferer is just as true (as far as his feeling is concerned) when he says: “I am sick, or I have pain,” from the standpoint of his body and mind. He states the truth that the feeling of pain is a mental state of which he is conscious. This statement may be the result of wrong thought or delusion but still he feels it for the time being. In order to deny this apparent truth of his feeling of sickness he will have to assert that quality or state of the Spirit which is permanent and unchangeable. Through suggestion in the form of constant affirmation of “wholeness” the

5. “*Prithvyāpyatejo’nilakhe samutthite panchâtmake yogagune pravritte; Na tasya rogo na jarâ na mrityuh prâptasya yogâgnimayam sharîram.*”—Shvetâshvatara Upanishad, II. 12.

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the patient's mind will be lifted above all erroneous feelings and convictions, and perfect health which is the normal expression of Spirit will be manifested on the plane of sense-consciousness.

Each of these classes of healers, however, demand absolute faith on the part of the patient. If the patient has absolute faith, it does not matter whether the healer adopts the negative or positive or metaphysical method. Because absolute and dogmatic faith brings the receptive attitude of mind and helps the patient focus his whole mental powers on one ideal, and the result is the most marvellous cure of a very serious disorder. If the patient can once gain faith in the power of the Spirit and can doggedly assert that the symptoms of his troubles are nothing but unreal thought-forms caused by erroneous thinking and indiscrimination (*Avidyā* and *Avruka*), then the patient is sure to get immediate relief and instantaneous healing. Jesus said unto him: "If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believe."¹ "Thy faith hath made thee whole."² "Believe, only and she shall be made whole."³ The faith healers use the power of absolute and dogmatic faith directly, while the mental healers, divine healers, and metaphysical healers use this power of faith indirectly, through the medium of affirmation and denials.

1. Cf. Mark, IX, 28.

2. Cf. Luke, VIII, 48.

3. Cf. Luke, VIII, 50.

Now the method of spiritual healing is distinct from any of these methods. It does not depend upon *denials* or *affirmations*. It is a direct method of drawing from the infinite Spirit the healing power of *Prâna* and bringing it down to the conscious plane and directing it to the subconscious.¹ This can be done consciously. It is a method of direct manipulation of the subconscious stratum of our *being* by the illumined consciousness of our true Self or Spirit (*Atman*). We do not have to *deny* sickness or *affirm* wholeness or exercise faith, but we have to rise into superconscious state, and fill our whole subconscious *being* with higher vibrations of *Prâna* or life-force, which emanate from the infinite stock of the Spirit or *Atman*, and then focus those vibrations to the centre of disorder in the physical body and charge the cells and tissues of the organs with the healing power of *Prâna*. Thus strengthened by the illumined consciousness of the Spirit and charged by the normal vibrations of *Prâna* the cells and tissues will throw off

1. Henry Wood shows the difference between spiritual healing and mental healing by stating: "Spiritual healing is beyond ordinary intellectual apprehension. Transcending as it does the plane of the reasoning faculty, it cannot be proved by argumentative logic. It concerns the inner ego, and can only be comprehended by the deeper vision of the intuitional and spiritual nature."

"On the contrary", he says, "mental healing is entirely based upon law, which, though belonging to the higher domain, is orderly and exact. It enjoins human compliance with *existing* law, already perfect and incapable of improvement."—Cf. *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography*, p. 20.

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impurities, kill germs, microbes and bacteria, and completely recover from their abnormal vibrations. The result will be a marvellous cure.

In the first place, you will have to understand what the Truth is, whether you are the Spirit or the body, and change your conviction. Remember that you are the maker of the blood, that you are the master of the body, that you are manufacturing all the time, consciously or unconsciously, the nervous matter and physical strength. And if you cannot do this, who else will do it for you? If I am the maker of the body, the maker of the blood, and if I cannot do it myself, who else can help me? "Heaven helps those who help themselves." We have to remember that we are endowed with that healing power already, and we should exercise it; and at the same time, we should have the understanding. We should *correct our errors* and understand the Absolute Truth.

I will give you an illustration of the healing made by spiritual method, that is, without *affirming* or *denying*. A few years ago, when I was living at the Vedânta Ashrama at West Cornwall, Connecticut, I met with an accident. My right leg got twisted and the fibula was fractured. I could not walk and the pain was acute. With great difficulty I came home from the orchard where I had this accident and told everybody that my leg was broken. The Vedânta Ashrama was situated in the heart of the Berkshire mountains far way from civilization. There was neither doctor nor hospital in the

neighbourhood. Consequently, there was no way of getting any help. I bathed my leg with hot water. All friends there thought that it was a bad sprain and advised me to rub horse liniment and not to stay in bed but to get over it by the power of mind. I replied: "All right, I will try". Then with a piece of cloth I bandaged my leg and used it just as if nothing had happened. I was walking without crutches with difficulty. It did not heal very well for sometime, and there was constant pain on the spot. People would not believe that I had this fracture. After a few days I went to New York and consulted with a noted surgeon, who was a friend of mine. I was limping when I went to his chamber and he asked me what was the matter. I said that I fell and sprained the muscles of my leg. He said: "Let me see." After examining he told me that I had a fracture of the *fibula*, and that I must go to a hospital at once and have it set. I said that I would like to see the X-ray photograph of the fracture and convince myself as well as my friends. The doctor sent me to the best man in the city of New York, who took the X-ray photograph of the broken bone, and it showed a diagonal fracture of a bad type.¹ In the meantime, I was walking without crutches. Once, I remember, I was walking with a friend of mine who was a fast walker, and who could walk a mile in about ten minutes, and I was trying to keep pace with him

1. The X-ray photograph reproduced on the next page.

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with my broken leg! The doctor told me to put my leg out of commission and have it properly set. He also said that if I did not give absolute rest to my leg I would remain lame all my life. He wanted to send me to a hospital. But I refused to go, and returned to the Ashrama instead. There I used my leg as if nothing had happened. A callous was formed at first and the fractured bone healed itself in a short time.

Afterwards I went down to Florida and lectured in different cities. Once I gave three lectures in one Sunday (in Atlanta, Georgia) and stood on my leg for six hours (two hours for each). A noted Christian Science healer told me that if I were a Christian Scientist I would have been immortalized for this marvellous healing of a fractured bone.

This demonstration proved that in spiritual healing *the negative method of denial* and *the positive method of affirmation* are not absolutely necessary. One should go direct to the source of all healing power and get from there abundance of life force, and direct it consciously to the subconscious plane, and let the subconscious mind manifest it wherever it is needed, and produce marvellous cure.¹ It will knit together the broken bones, and cure all ail-

1. "It is provided, that in the various departments of human consciousness, the ego must make constant progress in its residential preferences, from the lower towards the higher, otherwise, arrested development, inharmony, dis-ease, and finally inversion, take place."—Cf. Henry Wood: *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography*, p. 67.

ments. A broken bone is seldom healed by the mental healers or Christian Scientists. But it can be done by spiritual method of healing. Nothing is impossible for the omnipotent Spirit (*Atman*) which dwells within us.²

The science of spiritual healing does not urge anyone to believe in anything except in the truth of one's own spiritual Self which is omnipotent. It does not make any difference whether one is a follower of Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, or of Mrs. Eddy. So long as each soul is a part of the infinite Spirit, it is potentially Divine and all-powerful. You do not have to join any cult, or accept anything, but remember that all books on healing and all modern healers and other teachers are telling you the same truth which has been taught for ages, before the time of Jesus, especially among the Yogis of India. You will find this truth explained for the first time in the Vedas. The whole of the Atharva Veda deals with faith healing and mental and spiritual healing.

Spiritual healing depends entirely upon going into the superconscious state and drawing from the infinite Spirit all the powers that we need. If we can once learn how to send the vibrations of the healing power of *Prâna* to the cells and tissues of

2. The Spirit or *Atman* really does not heal or cure anything. The Swâmi means to say here that it is the will-power which when illumined by the Divine radiance of the omnipotent Spirit heals or cures diseases and ailments.—P.

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the body, we have learnt the secret of this science.

Self-healing should be practised before one tries to heal others. In self-healing one should discriminate between the real and the unreal, between the eternal and the non-eternal, between the spirit and matter, between the truth and error or false concept of the appearance of Truth. For instance, when a person is suffering from cold, he should ask these questions: Does the Spirit catch cold? Does the body or matter catch cold? If the Spirit cannot catch cold, then who catches cold? It is a delusion of the indiscriminative mind. Therefore, proper discrimination will remove that delusion instantly, just as the darkness of night is dispelled at the approach of the light of the sun.

Right discrimination will correct all errors and will bring a conviction that as the Spirit is free from sickness, and as my true Self is the Spirit, I can never be sick or ill. When this spiritual conviction takes root in the consciousness of the patient, that very moment he becomes free from the wrong conviction of sickness which was the cause of his trouble and *instantaneously* he is healed.

Some people use the method called *visualization*, or, in other words, forming a mental image that the patient is strong and healthy. But mere *visualization* cannot do the healing. The correct understanding of the true nature of the perfect Spirit must be at the bottom of all methods of healing. A directly opposite thought is needed to rectify the

erroneous concept. Of course, there are cases where the ignorant and weak mind of the patient needs help from stronger and more discriminative minds.

According to the 'science of spiritual healing' all treatment of diseases is based upon the fundamental principles:

(1) That the Spirit (*Atman*) is the creator and master of the body.

(2) That the individual spirit is as perfect and omnipotent as the Universal Spirit (God or *Brahman*).

(3) That the life-force or *Prâna* proceeds from the Spirit (*Atman*).

(4) That the cells and tissues have life and mind in each and governed by the subconscious mind of the individual.

(5) That the individual soul or the self-conscious thinker (*jīvâtman*) can draw abundance of healing power from the Supreme Spirit by entering into superconsciousness.

(6) That the Spirit can directly heal all disorders of the organs, nerves, of the body and *dis-ease* of the mind as well.

Through the illumined consciousness of the Supreme Spirit, the individual soul rises above all errors and delusion, and de-hypnotizes itself from the obsession of fear, false conviction, and sickness and other influences of ignorance and indiscrimina-
tion.

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As long as we are identified with the gross physical body we have the feeling of oneness with it and we possess the body-ideas; but this will appear as a delusion the moment we become conscious of our true Self or Spirit (*Atman*).¹

In reality, you are not the body but, on the contrary, you are the creator of your body, which is nothing but the *externalization* of your thought-form. You have manufactured it as a dwelling-house to live in and to gain experience in this world of phenomena. Therefore, it is your creation and its future is entirely in your own hands. You need not give thanks to anybody. Thank yourself if you wish. Here you should remember that you are not Mr. or Mrs. or Miss So-and-so, but that you are the *Spirit* which is Divine and perfect. You cannot have any sickness, or any kind of disorder or ill-health; on the other hand, you should always manifest normal functions of life and vital energy. All these normal activities are distorted by the wrong idea that you are the body, that you were born, that you are going to die. This is the greatest error, the

1. Achârya Sankara has dealt skilfully with this subject in his *Commentary on Nescience (Adhyâsa-bhâsya)* in the *Brahmasutra* of Vyâsa. He puts: "*Atyantaviviktayor-dharmadharminor-mithyâjñânanimittah satyânrite mithunîkritya ahamidam mamedamiti naisargiko'yam lokavyavahârah.*" At last he well concludes by stating: "*Evamaya-manâdi-rananto-naisargiko'dhyâso mithyâpratyayarupah kârtva-bhoktriva-pravartakah sarvoloṇapratyaksah. Asyânarthahetoh prahânâya âtmakatva-vidyâ-pratipattaye sarve Vedântâ ârabhyante.*"

greatest delusion. You, the eternal Spirit, *were never born and will never die*. You are birthless and deathless. You must not think that you will *become* immortal after death. This would be impossible if you were not immortal even now. This grand truth is the keynote of the Vedânta philosophy. You do not have to believe in any scriptural statements. It is the eternal Truth. Be convinced of this Truth at this very moment.

The science of spiritual healing admits the fact that each living soul possesses the power of healing, that the mind has the power to stimulate any part of the body, relieve pain and produce a most perfect anæsthesia. It can create anti-toxin against any kind of poison if admitted in the system, so long as it has normal and healthy conditions of the organic functions to help its actions against poisons and germs of diseases. A living soul can produce chemical changes in the system by creating necessary acids and alkalis.

Now, suppose that the patient is weak and unable to produce the anti-toxins, acids and alkalis by his own initiative; in such cases powerful suggestions from another healthy mind of a healer might produce the same effect in the system of the patient. The power of such a suggestion has an influence upon the subconscious activities. Of course, the *oral* suggestions are more effective than the *silent* ones. It is a kind of reflex or unconscious action which remedies the disorder. The healer's influence might come from a great distance. But distance

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does not hinder the power of thought as the individual minds are connected by the undercurrent of one eternal Cosmic Mind. This is the secret of what is called *Absent Treatment*.

III

HEALING BY DISCARNATE SPIRIT

Science of spiritual healing also tells us that as one human mind can influence another mind on the human plane, so the mind of discarnate spirit can influence our mind. There have been authentic cases of cure caused by the influence of discarnate spirits. All such cases have been recorded in the journals of the Psychical Research Society, where proper diagnosis and correct remedies have been made by disembodied spirits.

Sometimes incurable cases, given up as hopeless by medical practitioners and mental healers of all kinds have been cured by the intervention of discarnate spirits. The spiritualists of all countries are familiar with many such cases. Then again, there are healers who work under direct spirit control and perform marvellous cures through the guidance of the discarnate minds. But the patients, of course, do not know how the healing is done.

This method of healing by the power of disembodied mind or spirit have been recognized and upheld

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by all the great religions of the world. It is very strong among the Roman Catholics; they believe that the spirits of departed saints have the power of curing the incurable diseases. Saint Rita performs miraculous cures of impossible cases. There are such saints in all religions. By praying to any one of them, the spirit of that saint will produce wonderful cures. This belief is also very prevalent among the Hindus, Buddhists and Mohammedans.

Thus prayer is another method by which healing can be done. But you must not pray like that old lady who prayed for the mountain to move away. She had a house at the foot of a hill in Europe, and she wanted to have a backyard. So, she went to her room, which had a window facing the hill. She pulled down the shades and sat there a few minutes and prayed, saying: "O mountain, be thou removed and cast into the sea." She asserted and repeated it few times and closed her eyes and meditated upon it. Then after a few minutes she wanted to see what happened. She went to the window, and pulled up the shade, and exclaimed: "I knew all the time that the mountain would be there." You see, that kind of prayer would not do any good. She was thinking that the mountain would remain there, and at the same time praying that it would move away. If she had real faith it might have moved. A great many people pray to the Lord: "O Lord, do this thing and do that thing", but at the same time in their inner consci-

ousness they know that it is not going to be. Such a thought is an obstruction and naturally no effect is produced. Therefore, we must learn *how to pray*. Jesus said: "Therefore, I say unto you, what things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them".¹ "That whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith".²

Earnest prayer with strong desire has cured many hopeless cases. I heard a noted healer say that once he prayed earnestly for twenty-two hours steadily until the disease was cured. The sacrament of extreme unction at the time of death might produce wonderful effects if the prayers of the priest are not mere lip prayers, if they are not dead but alive with unselfish love, true devotion and unbound faith.

Faith-healers have performed most wonderful cures through the miraculous power of faith. But blind faith-healing does not produce a lasting or permanent result. Because it does not destroy the darkness by the light of wisdom. Right faith, however, when attended with the correct understanding of the truth, removes the causes of error and produces lasting results. Blind-faith cures are often done at Lourdes in France and in other sacred places all

1. St. Mark, XI, 24.

2. Ibid., XI, 23.

over the world, where people go with various kinds of ailments and come out healed. Sometimes instantaneous healing is done as soon as the power of true faith is manifested; that is, when the individual consciousness and convictions are changed into something which is in perfect harmony with the unchangeable Truth, by faith attended with the right knowledge of the Absolute Spirit (*Atman*), it will produce wonderful effect instantly upon the physical and mental conditions of the patient. Therefore, instantaneous healing is a natural thing.

Thus we see that the science of healing includes all these various methods, but insists that in order to gain the correct method of spiritual healing one should enter into the superconscious state and commune with the Divine Spirit, dwelling within and which has all the powers of healing, and then manifest perfect health in the body and mind. By entering into that state and communing with the true Spirit, we shall realize the truth that we are no longer mortals, that we are not afflicted by any disease, that we are not sick, that we have no fear of death, and that we are immortal.

Vedānta teaches: "While we are here we must know this (*Atman*); if we do not know, there is great harm. Those who know it become immortal, but others suffer pain indeed".² "Whoever has

2. "*Ehaiva sañto'tha vidmastadvayam na chedavedirmahati vinastih; Ye tadviduramritāste bhavantyathetare dukkham evāpiyanti.*"—Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad, IV. 4. 14.

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found and understood the Self that has entered this physical body, he indeed is the Creator, for he is the maker of everything, his is the world, and he is the world itself".³ "Evil does not overcome him, he overcomes evil, evil does not burn him, he burns all evil." "Free from evil, free from doubt the perfect soul becomes the knower of Truth (*Brahman*)".⁴

The science of spiritual healing thus explains the power of the Spirit over mind and matter, and that each living soul, being the image or reflection of the Divine Spirit, is the true healer within us. At present we are all deluded by the charms and attractions of the material world and the objects of senses; but, however, deluded we may be at the present moment, if we can once, even for a second, overcome this self-delusion and forgetfulness of our all-powerful Spirit, and remove from our consciousness the mistaken notion that we are mortal bodies, we shall instantaneously be free from all sickness, sorrow, disease and death, and shall be able to help others by bringing them out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of the self-effulgent Spirit which is the abode of "perfect health".

3. "*Yasyānuvittah prativuddha Atma'smin sandehye gahane pravistah; Sa visvakrit sa hi sarvasya kartā tasya lokāḥ sa u loka eva.*"—Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, IV. 4. 13.

4. "*Atmani evātmanam paśyati, sarvātmanam paśhyati, nainam pāpmā tarati, sarvam pāpmānam tarati, nainam pāpmā tapati, sarvam pāpmānam tapati; vipāpo viraḥo vichikitsa Brāhmano bhavati.*"—Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, IV. 4. 23.

CHAPTER V

SCIENCE OF PERFECT HEALTH

“Perfect health is the firm and sure root of success, prosperity, the fulfilment of desires and the freedom of the soul. Diseases are its enemies. They destroy the blessings of living,” so says the *Hindu Science of Life* (Ayurveda). There is a most intimate relation between the mind (*psyche*) and the body (*physique*). So, to get control over the psychic phenomena we should make our bodies or health quite controlled, perfect and sound.

From ancient time, we see, among all classes of people, in all countries, a long life attended with perfect health, has been considered to be the greatest blessing to earthly existence. Wherever we go we find hundreds and thousands of people who are clamouring for perfect health, and who are anxious to do everything which lies in their power to attain it. They are ready to follow the advice of physicians, Christian Scientists, Mental Healers, Divine Healers, and all those men and women who claim to know some method by which this universal ideal of perfect health can be acquired. Hospitals, asylums, medical institutions are filled to their utmost capacity by people from all classes, and the hands of numberless private physicians are so full that they rarely find oppor-

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tunity to have a square meal or a perfect rest at night. Indeed, the cry for perfect health is universal.

Scientists are devoting their time and energy to tracing the causes of ill-health and disease and are making experiments day after day, night after night, to discover the remedies which will remove those causes and bestow perfect health on mankind. Most of these scientific men, however, believe in the materialistic theory of life and try to find material causes for all diseases and for ill-health and to remove them by material methods. The medical practitioners in modern times deny the existence of the soul as a conscious intelligent entity which is distinct from matter and material forces, and they trace the origin of all diseases and of ill-health to organic disorders, to physical conditions, to dietetic effects, to climatic influences, to the violation of hygienic laws, to microbes and bacteria.

It is true that in many cases diseases arise from these physical and physiological conditions. It is also true that perfect health is to be found in bodies where the organic functions are normal, where food and drink are properly digested, the hygienic laws observed, and the system is strong enough to remove all the imperfections and to kill all the microbes and bacteria which are constantly attacking our organism.

Recent scientific investigations have proved that many of the causes which impair our health are

brought about by improper food eaten. Some of the advanced hygienists and dietists have gone so far as to declare that most of the diseases can be cured simply by regulating what we eat and drink;—that right food brings health and beauty, while wrong food causes indigestion, ill-health, bad circulation of blood, bad temper, neurasthenia (which is in reality nothing but brain or nerve hunger).

Now, we are told what kind of food should be used by brain workers and what by manual labourers. The idea is, whatever chemical properties our system requires, whatever makes us efficient in different lines of work, we must supply in the form of food and drink.

Food experts of this age after examining the chemical properties of various kinds of meat, fish, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and cereals have divided them into five different classes: (1) Vital or nerve or brain foods—meat, fish, game, poultry, and dairy food; (2) Blood purifying, cooling, laxative—fresh vegetables and fruits; (3) Non-nourishing vegetables and greens such as spinach, parsley, watercress, salad, cucumber, etc., which when combined with vital foods produce harmonious effects in the system; (4) Acid fruits like lemon, orange, grape fruit, tomatoes; (5) Starchy foods that nourish muscles and generate muscular strength such as cereals—wheat, rice, oatmeal, etc.

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The proper combination of these different kinds of foods in right proportion according to the climate and season will help us all in retaining physical health when once it is acquired. Rev. Dr. Talmage wrote: "Many a man is trying to do by prayer what can only be done by correct diet." There is some truth in this statement, because a great many people think that they can use the power of the mind and digest and sort of indigestible stuff. This is a mistake. It would be a waste of the mental power. Why should we use our mental energy in that line, when we can achieve greater results by lesser effort? The value of this noble principle should be understood. Mr. Edison, the inventor had a long life with good health, and frequently he used to say: "I keep my health by dieting." Diet is the secret of my health; it is a religion with me." And it has been a religion with many people who understand the dietetic laws.

Sometimes the combination of the food-stuff that we take is injurious. We must know that there are certain kinds of food that can be digested in one hour, another in two hours, another in three hours, another in four to five hours. An improper mixture of these different kinds will cause a disorder in the stomach. The digestive organs will first pick out the kind which will be digested in one hour, while the other kinds will take their turn and will go through fermentation before they are digested. Again, if the food-stuff remains in the

stomach without going through the process of digestion, it does not produce proper nourishment, but, on the contrary; it creates all kinds of troubles. A great many people, however, do not understand the law of digestion, and therefore, they suffer from different kinds of ailments.

There are some extremists, however, who think that by correcting the food and drink all diseases can be cured. Of course, there are food cranks, like cranks in any other line of thought, who go from one extreme to another. There are many instances of men and women who were once in the habit of living mostly on animal flesh, and who suddenly gave up meat diet and went to another extreme and tried to live upon non-nourishing diet. Their system began to starve and in a short time it was completely ruined. I have known some people who suffered terribly from such a sudden change and the result was disastrous to their health. It brought on all kinds of trouble. I knew a crank who got an idea that to drink water was the worst thing for health, and stopped entirely from drinking it. After a month he was reduced to a skeleton, and in a short time was at the point of death. Such fanatics are to be found in all parts of the world. They go from one extreme to another.

There are some people, again, who think that they can cure all diseases and gain perfect health by long fasting. Continuous fasting is just as injurious as over-eating, because it leads to starva-

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tion. In starvation the vital energy which is stored in the system in the form of fat and other substance is used up. Gradually, the tissues will live upon tissues to gain their strength, and eventually all muscles will wither and fade away in a short time. But proper method of fasting will produce beneficial result.¹ It will eliminate all the impurities of the system. One should drink plenty of water, at least two quarts every day. Water, being the source of our life, is always needed in the system. 'This is one of the principal conditions for gaining good health.

Others believe that Fletcherism or mastication of any kind of food, however wrong it may be, will cure all diseases. This is another error, although it must be admitted that proper mastication is a great aid to digestion. Perfect health is to be found when the physical conditions and the organic functions are normal, and this can be gained through proper selection and combination of right food and drink, good digestion, assimilation, and cleanliness. Cleanliness means not only external cleanliness (not merely washing the face and hands with a little soap and water), but the cleanliness of the whole body, externally and internally and

1. J. J. Walsh says: "Fasting was always recognized as an extremely valuable adjunct in the control of passions, and the poor, if they do not fast often, have often insufficient food. The bodily passions, especially those related to sex, are particularly likely to be influenced by overfeeding."

that cleanliness will remove all impure matter from the system.

Our skin breathes. In fact, every part of the system breathes, and if the body is covered up with dirt, then the organic functions will be obstructed; therefore, the whole system should always be kept clean. Cleanliness is the secret of a beautiful figure and complexion. Sparkling eyes, with a spotless complexion, are the signs of good blood and good health, and if these are blended with abundance of vital energy, then the possessor of these must be regarded as the ideal of perfect physical health.

As proper food, observance of hygienic laws, physical exercise and correct breathing are helpful secrets of making the favourable conditions under which it is possible to acquire good physical health, so they also exercise a great influence upon the mental conditions of the individual. Food and drink have a great deal to do with our temper, thoughts, disposition and character. A man who sits for hours in a stuffy room, in his office, generally feels dull, irritable and melancholy, because his liver gets out of order, and then he becomes cross. He comes tired and exhausted; he does not know what is the matter with him. Perhaps he has eaten something which would require hard physical labour and outdoor exercise. But he did not know that. Sometimes bad temper and irritable disposition are caused by the eating

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of too many eggs. Excessive amount of sulphur in the yoke of eggs takes away appetite.

Correct food, when properly combined and thoroughly digested, brings efficiency to the brain for success in business. The old story that the Battle of Leipzig was lost through indigestion caused by a tough leg of mutton has some truth in it. Clear thoughts, insight into business problems and quick actions with concentration are some of the results of right living. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that we should understand what our system needs and what we ought to supply. Mere thought of perfect health alone will not do; we must make the proper conditions under which we can enjoy perfect health.

Nowadays we find that a great many of the ideas that have been held very sacred in India from ancient times, are beginning to become popular in the Western civilized world. For example, the regulation of diet will help young men and women control their passions and sex desires. People should understand this, and educate their children from very early life to know what kind of food is to be taken. There are some foods which would increase our passionate nature. We should not indulge in those things. There are other foods which are cooling and soothing, and would make the mental and organic functions harmonious. That kind of food would bring peace to the mind and health to the body. It would produce a quiet

disposition, and then we shall be able to enjoy life.

People of this country (America) are just beginning to wake up to the truths of Eugenics, and sanitary marriage laws are enforced in some of the states. Undoubtedly, it will be a great boon to future generations. All these are indispensable for the acquirement of a healthy body. In India among the Hindu people these laws have been observed from time immemorial.

Professor Schenk has discovered how to control the sex of offspring by special diet, but this idea was taught in India from the Vedic period. These ancient Masters of India knew how to control the sex of children by regulating the diet.

Now, you will notice that in the United States the hygienic laws are scrupulously observed in dairy farms. The farmers have learnt to treat their cows properly, and in certain places they almost worship the cows: they fan them with electric fans, shoo the flies off their backs, just as they do in India. This cleanliness is absolutely necessary to protect the milk, cream and butter from all kinds of germs of disease which they absorb. Until lately the ignorant missionaries and the so-called apostles of Western civilization have ridiculed the Hindu people of India because they have observed these sanitary laws religiously in their dairy farms. They condemned this custom and called the Hindus heathen idolators and worshippers of cows. With a loud noise they tried to civilize them by converting

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them into their own faith. But now those heathen customs are adopted in civilized America.

Again, the so-called caste rules which were condemned by missionaries are now enforced in railroad trains and in the public places by introducing individual drinking cups for all, to stop the spread of contagious diseases and to protect the health of the ignorant public. Thus the civilized world is just learning the truth of the ancient customs of the Hindus, and the scientists with their microscopes are helping them to understand the sanitary laws of perfect health.

In India, religion was brought into every phase of life, even in the dairy farms and in the treatment of cows. It is all religion with them. But they use the word *Dharma*, which means *law*; hence, *Religion* means 'laws of life' and also 'moral and spiritual laws'. They observed all these laws and taught their children, and naturally the effect was wonderful. But as we grow wiser through the study of scientific truths and through the understanding of physical, mental and moral laws, we begin to correct our errors and mistakes and march toward the enjoyment of perfect health.

But here the question arises: Who is going to enjoy perfect health? The body or some intelligent substance? Who is going to regulate the organic functions and to remove all these imperfections which obstruct the normal activities of the organs? Who is going to digest properly the food and drink, to extract nourishment from it, to transmute

it into nervous energy, into thought-force, and will-power? Who is going to produce harmonious development of the organs, and who will kill the microbes and bacteria that are constantly entering into our system through food and drink, air and water? The advocates of the materialistic theory of life, who do not believe in the existence of a soul, say that the result of a harmonious combination of unintelligent matter and material forces will produce thoughts and do these wonderful things; the combination of matter will produce the power of digesting food, of converting it into nervous energy, into thought force, into will-power, into intelligence. They do not feel the necessity of admitting the existence of a conscious intelligent entity which is not the chemical product of insentient matter and material forces governed by the mechanical laws of nature. They do not stop for a moment to think whether or not the effect of such a combination of unintelligent matter and material forces, which are constantly changing, can ever produce life and enjoy perfect health. The medical practitioners are extremely busy in repairing the building, patching up the imperfections, without knowing who the builder is, and without comprehending the aims, and powers of that architect. In fact, they deny the existence of the architect. They do not know that the soul is the architect of the fleshy tabernacle which is called "human body." They think that body is produced by unintelligent forces of nature and the soul, the architect, is the result of all these

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materials forces; in short, that matter and material forces are the architect.

In the first place, we should learn who this architect is, who has built this dwelling-house which we call the physical body, and why the architect makes errors in building this house; and then, if we find that the soul commits mistakes simply through the spell of ignorance, we should then learn to educate it, to open its eyes and make it see things in their truest light. Otherwise, it will continue to make mistakes again and again, no matter what drugs are given to it by the medical practitioners believe in the materialistic theory of life.

Socrates said once: "Men were foolish to try to heal the body without healing the soul. Soul is mind, and is the source. Soul makes the body. Soul the cause; body, effect." An unhealthy soul or a *dis-eased* soul (uneasy soul) cannot produce a healthy body nor can it enjoy perfect health. It may be surrounded by the best specialists for all diseases, who may give very valuable advice, and it may have all the drugs and remedies of the world at her disposal; still it will not enjoy perfect health if it be diseased or unhealthy. Food and drink entering into the system will create poison instead of nourishment, and will produce ailments instead of perfect health. The medical science of today does not recognize this fact because it is based upon erroneous theories and materialistic principles. The doctors and physicians do not understand the

relation between the soul and the body. They try to find out the causes on the physical plane, but they ignore the existence of causes in the *dis-ease* of the soul. They think that diseases of the physical body are caused by physical conditions and that the physical body manufactures the soul; but, in reality, the soul manufactures the physical body. The argument which tries to prove that the soul is created by the physical body is as absurd as the argument which tries to establish the value of putting the cart before the horse.

Within our gross physical body there is a subtle body, which is called by different names. Some call it the natural or spiritual body, others the mortal body, while the Theosophists say it is the astral body. It is composed of finer particles of matter, ethereal in form, and is governed by the finer forces of nature. It may be called the under-garment of the soul, while the outer garment is the gross physical body. This subtle body consists of mental and sense powers and of those forces which give strength and vitality to the internal organs and perform all the functions of those organs. It is produced by the life-force or *Prâna* as it is called in Sanskrit. *Prâna* means the vital energy of the universe, or that which keeps all beings alive. *Prâna* is neither oxygen nor electricity; it is not the same as any of the physico-chemical forces that we know; but it is distinct from them. It governs them, directs them, regulates them and controls them. We cannot deny the power of *Prâna*; for it

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is manifested in each one of us. We are inseparable from it and live by it, whether we know it or not. It serves its functions when all other physico-chemical forces are in abeyance and that force of *Prâna* governs the subtle body and manufactures the physical body. If the subtle body is normal, then the organic functions are normal and the result is perfect health; but if the vibrations of this *Prâna* be abnormal, then the activities of the subtle body will also become abnormal, and pathological conditions will arise and manifest themselves in the form of ailments or diseases. The word *disease* literally means *dis-ease*, uneasy state of body, hence pain or suffering. But the feeling of pain or suffering is not in the gross, physical body but in the subtle body. A true physician, therefore, should not only trace the physical causes of a disease but should understand the relation between the soul or the subtle body and the gross physical body, and should learn the conditions under which this subtle body is acting and whether those conditions are favourable or unfavourable, whether or not the soul is in a normal state.

He is not a true physician who merely pours poisonous drugs into the system of a patient and then waits for the result, as if he were going to make an experiment; but he is a true physician who diagnoses the pathological conditions of disease in the subtle body and understands them thoroughly. Modern medical science, as it stands now, is in its experimental stage. It is not yet perfected, as we

all know. What is good and beneficial in one case may produce pernicious effects in the case of another. That particular dose of drug or medicine which helps one will not, perhaps, help another constitution. We must not forget that, as two faces are not exactly alike, so two constitutions, two minds, two subtle bodies, two individual souls, are not absolutely the same, and this fact puts many difficulties in the path of one who is trying to practise medicine. How enormous are the difficulties and how over-whelming the conditions which medical science must overcome in order to reach perfection! And who can tell when that state will be reached?

Medical practitioners should first of all find out the psychic conditions of the subtle body. We all know that the artificial mode of living, worry, anxiety, hard competition, failure in business, and unnatural food are the banes of modern civilization. Worry causes many diseases, such as heart trouble, lung trouble, kidney trouble, Bright's diseases and other disorders from which people are suffering, are caused by worry and anxiety, and these causes will not be removed until the physician has learnt the normal and abnormal conditions of the subtle body of the patient. The highest end and aim of life have now become material prosperity, and everybody is struggling hard to gain success in business at any cost. What result does that state of mind produce? We never think of this. How can one expect to enjoy perfect health when one's ideal is material prosperity, and when one is

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obliged to sacrifice one's moral and spiritual life upon the altar of earthly ambition and material gain?

Constant thought of material objects drags the soul down on the plane of gross matter, produces abnormal mental states and creates disease of the mind and body. It exerts a degenerating influence upon the soul. The more we think of material objects the further we are away from the spiritual abode of perfect health. The continuous thought of body and matter weakens the will-power, and the soul then seeks help from matter and material conditions. It enslaves the soul to the physical body and makes it attached to the environmental conditions. *Through its delusive power we mistake the body for the soul and matter for spirit.* Is there any state more deplorable than this self-delusion? Are we the same as the physical body? No, we are not, but at present we have become one with the physical body. A little change in the atmosphere produces a change in us. The other day I was talking to a friend of mine and he said: "Why, I feel every change in the atmosphere so much. What is my conditions?" I said: "Your condition is like the thermometer, like the globular mercury, rising up and down. You have no control over your own system." And we have become almost like thermometers. A little change in the weather will make us sneeze. If we stay in a draft, we have grippe. Think of the deplorable state to which we have reduced ourselves!

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Can we wonder why people who live this way do not enjoy perfect health?

Here let me ask: "Who catches cold? Who suffers from indigestion?" Neither the spirit nor the dead matter of the body can catch cold or have indigestion. If matter had the feeling of pain then the dead body would also suffer. There must be something which stands between spirit and matter which enjoys or suffers. It is the subtle body or the mind that feels and suffers. Mind is the ruler, director and organizer of the physical body. The true sign of perfect health is to be found at the moment *when one does not think of the body, when one does not feel its existence in particular*. When one is not specially conscious of any particular organ or limb, then that is the sign of perfect health of that part. Aches and pains drag the soul down and confine and focus its consciousness to one particular spot; but when we have no special consciousness of any organ or limb, we have neither ache nor pain. When we are not aware of our bodies, then we enjoy perfect health. When the body seems to be buoyant, lighter, as it were, than the air we breathe, without any sensation of pain and ache, at that time the soul is freed from its slavery to the body. If we arrive at a state when we do not feel the cravings of the physical organism and the screaming of the cells and tissues of the body (aches and pains) which disturb the peace and tranquility of the soul, then we have attained to perfect health.

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Perfect health is not the ideal of spirituality, but it is the necessary condition under which the consciousness of our true Spirit can come. It is not the same as Godconsciousness or the highest spiritual realization, but it is the desirable state under which one can attain to Godconsciousness. Ordinary people think that perfect health is the highest end of everything and that there is nothing beyond. The Christian Scientists will perhaps say that it is the ideal of spiritual realization, but according to a Yogî there is a difference. He says that when the body and mind are in a state of perfect health, when we are not specially conscious of our physical bodies, we can hold the undisturbed thought of the supreme Spirit. So long as our consciousness is confined on a particular spot in the body, we cannot withdraw our mind and fix it upon our true Self; we cannot, therefore, attain to Godconsciousness. A Yogî says that perfect health is essential for the attainment of spiritual perfection.

By perfect health is not meant mere strength or vigour of the physical body, but it means the state of equilibrium between the vital currents and all organic functions. It is a harmony between the internal nature and the external nature, between the mental and the physical, between the activities of the subtle and the gross bodies.

This state of absolute harmony is not the goal of spiritual perfection. If physical health were the goal of spirituality, then the lower animals and

savages must be highly spiritual. We know that lower animals and savages do not have any of the diseases of civilized men or women; they live under trees, eat raw food and enjoy perfect health, but they cannot be considered highly spiritual. Therefore, we should not mix these two ideals and mistake the one for the other. It should be understood that perfect health makes one well-fitted for the attainment of spiritual perfection.

According to the Hindu medical science *Ayurveda* (which is far older than the Occidental medical science), diseases are divided into four general classes: First, *Agantuka*, i.e., those produced by external causes (such as blow or hurt) which are ordinarily called accidents. Secondly, *Shâirira*, i.e., internal organic disorders. Thirdly, *Mânasa*, i.e., those caused by mental conditions such as anger, hatred, worry, sorrow, jealousy, malice, envy, lust, passion, ambition, greed, fear, egotism, despondency. Here you will notice that from very ancient times all these mental conditions have been considered as abnormal states which cause changes in the system and which have their physical counterparts known as various diseases. They should never be encouraged for they poison the system. Fourthly, *Svâbhâvika*, i.e., those produced by natural causes such as hunger, thirst, old age, sleep, and so on.

It is said: Perfect health is at the root of success in life, of the fulfilment of all desires, as also of the attainment of the highest spiritual realization

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and absolute freedom of the soul; while diseases are the enemies of these as well as of prosperity and earthly existence." Therefore, we should try to cure all diseases and strive for perfect health. This body is considered to be the boat which will carry us to the other shore of the sea of earthly life. A Yogî says that perfect health must be acquired first and, in order to gain it, we must control our minds and make the mental functions normal, then harmonize the mental activities with organic movements and vital currents, by adopting a right mode of living. When that harmony is established, there will be no more aches and pains and the physical body will be free from all diseases.

Some people suffer from diseases which are caused by the violation of the hygienic laws. It creates disturbance first in the subtle body, then in the physical organism, and finally appears in the form of a disease. Some people reap the results of the evil thoughts and evil deeds of their previous lives, when they are born diseased, or when diseases suddenly attack them. Sometimes the diseases are in the blood; but why should one inherit such blood? What guides inheritance? There must be a law behind it. The diseased souls (egos) gravitate toward similar parents, since the law is *Like attracts the like*. For this reason, we may say that those who are born diseased are expiating the sins or mistakes which they committed in their previous incarnations.

Perfect health can be acquired by those who live the right kind of life, who understand the natural laws which govern our earthly existence. In order to attain it, one should practise those exercises which will develop the vital currents and restore the nervous energy. Ordinarily, we do not pay attention to the fact that the more we store away the nervous energy the stronger we become, and then we are able to fight against all unfavourable environmental conditions. If we have that nerve strength in us, if we have abundance of vital energy or *Prâna* within us, then our organism can kill the microbes and destroy all bacteria. But we do not know how to store away that energy in the nerve-centres in our system; we must learn these methods and when we have practised them we shall enjoy perfect health.

If an unhealthy person can realize for a moment the true nature of the Spirit, he will instantly gain access to the abode of perfect health. Correct breathing, right thinking and right living will help to purify our body and mind. There is a great deal of truth in the saying: "What thou thinkest, thou shalt become." If your thoughts are abnormal, pathological conditions will arise and organic disorders will be the result; but if you think constantly of the ideal of perfect health and never pay attention to diseases or aches and pains, then you are sure to have a healthy body. Whenever there is organic trouble we must withdraw our mind from that part of the system and try to think

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of the ideal of perfect health and deny the existence of the pain. The stronger the pain there is, the greater should be the effort of the soul to rise above it; and the higher the soul rises above the consciousness of the disorder the weaker and less powerful the disease will become. If you make a few experiments for yourself, you will be convinced of this great secret of health. Learn how to withdraw your mind from where there is ache or pain and fix it upon the highest ideal of perfect health, and then you will notice that your aches and pains have become less and less; but if you think of your pain strongly and nurse it by applying different so-called remedies, you are strengthening it and making it worse. Do not increase the diseased condition by admitting its existence, but bring the thought of perfect health to recover the normal state. The more you think of your disease, the worse it will become. This is a great truth, known all over the world, and it is now understood and preached by all the Mental healers, Divine healers, and Christian Scientists in the West. They have simply put a commercial value upon it, but this truth is universal; it cannot be monopolized by any particular kind of healer. ~

Mind has the power to cure disease and, in fact, the healing power exists in every individual. This healing power can be strengthened and increased by correct breathing and right thinking. Ordinarily, people do not breathe properly, and pay no attention to their mental conditions, but encourage

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hatred, jealousy, malice, greed, lust, fear, and other destructive forces, and they do not realize that all these produce abnormal activities of the subtle body first and then of the organic functions, and consequently they suffer. Therefore, instead of encouraging those causes of abnormal conditions of mind and body, we should encourage good thoughts, and develop friendliness or the feeling of love, mercy, truthfulness, kindness, purity and chastity.

Understand this truth first and demonstrate it in your own life and then teach your children the secret of attaining perfect health. Do not allow your children to think of diseases in any other way than as mere abnormal conditions of mind and .. body; that they last only for a short time, and that they pass away by right thinking and right living. At the same time, give them the ideal of perfect health—that is, a healthy body, a healthy mind and a healthy soul. Tell them to think that they are the children of immortal Bliss and of Absolute perfection.

Whoever thinks of Absolute perfection will surely attain to a healthy mind and a healthy body. All the abnormal mental states like anger, hatred, jealousy, malice, fear, passion, greed, vanity, pride, self-conceit and egotism, are the diseases of the mind; therefore, these should never be cultivated. They poison the system, create wrong vibration in the atmosphere of the place and influence other minds. A great disturbance in a family or in a

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community is caused by such destructive thought currents. Therefore, cultivate the opposite constructive thoughts which will bring health, prosperity and happiness. These are the birthright of every individual.

Once more let me remind you that perfect physical health is merely the means to an end. It is not the ultimate ideal of our *being*. But it is the proper physical condition under which the highest spiritual realization is possible. The science of perfect health teaches that spiritual perfection is attained when the body-idea vanishes and is entirely swept away from one's relative consciousness. When the soul lives like a disembodied Spirit (*Atman*) even while dwelling in a body on this earth, he is above all disease. How can there be a disease when the soul lives on the plane of Divine consciousness? This state is called *Jivanmukti*, the liberation of the soul from sorrow, suffering, disease and death even in this life. In this state the body may be cut or torn to pieces, but the liberated soul is not conscious of it, and remains undisturbed in the midst of terrible torture. There have been many instances in India of such perfected souls like Krishna, Buddha, Râmakrishna and others who reached this perfect freedom after starting in their journey with a healthy body and a healthy mind.

The soul that has realized this absolute liberation feels that the gross material body is a limitation, a bondage, an imprisonment. The ancient Hindu Science of Life (*Ayurveda*) tells us that the body-

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consciousness is a disease of the soul, and that when one becomes free from this bondage of a limited body one attains to Godconsciousness. Therefore, the body-idea must vanish and the true and immortal nature of the soul must be realized, for such a realization the first requisite is "perfect health".

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